

will be documented with the basis and rationale for that decision. In determining whether you knowingly made a false or misleading statement or omitted or failed to report a material fact so as to justify imposition of the penalty, we will consider all evidence in the record, including any physical, mental, educational, or linguistic limitations (including any lack of facility with the English language) which you may have had at the time. In determining whether you acted knowingly, we will also consider the significance of the false or misleading statement or omission or failure to disclose in terms of its likely impact on your benefits.

(f) *What should I do if I disagree with SSA's initial determination to penalize me?* If you disagree with our initial determination to impose a penalty, you have the right to request reconsideration of the penalty decision as explained in §416.1407. We will give you a chance to present your case, including the opportunity for a face-to-face conference. If you request reconsideration of our initial determination to penalize you, you have the choice of a case review, informal conference, or formal conference, as described in §416.1413(a) through (c). If you disagree with our reconsidered determination you have the right to follow the normal administrative and judicial review process by requesting a hearing before an administrative law judge, Appeals Council review and Federal court, review as explained in §416.1400.

(g) *When will the penalty period begin and end?* Subject to the additional limitations noted in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this section, the penalty period will begin the first day of the month for which you would otherwise receive payment of benefits under title II or title XVI were it not for imposition of the penalty. Once a sanction begins, it will run continuously even if payments are intermittent. If more than one penalty has been imposed, but they have not yet run, the penalties will not run concurrently.

(1) If you do not request reconsideration of our initial determination to penalize you, the penalty period will begin no earlier than the first day of the second month following the month in which the time limit for requesting

reconsideration ends. The penalty period will end on the last day of the final month of the penalty period. For example, if the time period for requesting reconsideration ends on January 10, a 6-month period of nonpayment begins on March 1 if you would otherwise be eligible to receive benefits for that month, and ends on August 31.

(2) If you request reconsideration of our initial determination to penalize you and the reconsidered determination does not change our original decision to penalize you, the penalty period will begin no earlier than the first day of the second month following the month we notify you of our reconsidered determination. The penalty period will end on the last day of the final month of the penalty period. For example, if we notify you of our reconsidered determination on August 31, 2001, and you are not otherwise eligible for payment of benefits at that time, but would again be eligible to receive payment of benefits on October 1, 2003, a 6-month period of nonpayment would begin on October 1, 2003 and end on March 31, 2004.

[65 FR 42286, July 10, 2000, as amended at 71 FR 61409, Oct. 18, 2006]

## Subpart N—Determinations, Administrative Review Process, and Reopening of Determinations and Decisions

**AUTHORITY:** Secs. 702(a)(5), 1631, and 1633 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 902(a)(5), 1383, and 1383b); sec. 202, Pub. L. 108-203, 118 Stat. 509 (42 U.S.C. 902 note).

**SOURCE:** 45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, unless otherwise noted.

### INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, AND INITIAL DETERMINATIONS

#### §416.1400 Introduction.

(a) *Explanation of the administrative review process.* This subpart explains the procedures we follow in determining your rights under title XVI of the Social Security Act. The regulations describe the process of administrative review and explain your right to judicial review after you have taken all the necessary administrative steps.

## § 416.1401

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

The administrative review process consists of several steps, which usually must be requested within certain time periods and in the following order:

(1) *Initial determination.* This is a determination we make about your eligibility or your continuing eligibility for benefits or about any other matter, as discussed in § 416.1402, that gives you a right to further review.

(2) *Reconsideration.* If you are dissatisfied with an initial determination, you may ask us to reconsider it.

(3) *Hearing before an administrative law judge.* If you are dissatisfied with the reconsideration determination, you may request a hearing before an administrative law judge.

(4) *Appeals Council review.* If you are dissatisfied with the decision of the administrative law judge, you may request that the Appeals Council review the decision.

(5) *Federal court review.* When you have completed the steps of the administrative review process listed in paragraphs (a)(1) through (a)(4) of this section, we will have made our final decision. If you are dissatisfied with our final decision, you may request judicial review by filing an action in a Federal district court.

(6) *Expedited appeals process.* At some time after your initial determination has been reviewed, if you have no dispute with our findings of fact and our application and interpretation of the controlling laws, but you believe that a part of the law is unconstitutional, you may use the expedited appeals process. This process permits you to go directly to a Federal district court so that the constitutional issue may be resolved.

(b) *Nature of the administrative review process.* In making a determination or decision in your case, we conduct the administrative review process in an informal, nonadversary manner. In each step of the review process, you may present any information you feel is helpful to your case. Subject to the limitations on Appeals Council consideration of additional evidence (see §§ 416.1470(b) and 416.1476(b)), we will consider at each step of the review process any information you present as well as all the information in our records. You may present the information yourself or have someone rep-

resent you, including an attorney. If you are dissatisfied with our decision in the review process, but do not take the next step within the stated time period, you will lose your right to further administrative review and your right to judicial review, unless you can show us that there was good cause for your failure to make a timely request for review.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986; 52 FR 4004, Feb. 9, 1987]

### § 416.1401 Definitions.

As used in this subpart:

*Date you receive notice* means 5 days after the date on the notice, unless you show us that you did not receive it within the 5-day period.

*Decision* means the decision made by an administrative law judge or the Appeals Council.

*Determination* means the initial determination or the reconsidered determination.

*Mass change* means a State-initiated change in the level(s) of federally administered State supplementary payments applicable to all recipients of such payments, or to categories of such recipients, due, for example, to State legislative or executive action.

*Preponderance of the evidence* means such relevant evidence that as a whole shows that the existence of the fact to be proven is more likely than not.

*Remand* means to return a case for further review.

*Substantial evidence* means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.

*Vacate* means to set aside a previous action.

*Waive* means to give up a right knowingly and voluntarily.

*We, us, or our* refers to the Social Security Administration.

*You or your* refers to any person or the eligible spouse of any person claiming or receiving supplemental security income benefits.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 59 FR 43038, Aug. 22, 1994; 73 FR 76944, Dec. 18, 2008]

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1403

### §416.1402 Administrative actions that are initial determinations.

Initial determinations are the determinations we make that are subject to administrative and judicial review. We will base our initial determination on the preponderance of the evidence. We will state the important facts and give the reasons for our conclusions in the initial determination. Initial determinations regarding supplemental security income benefits include, but are not limited to, determinations about—

(a) Your eligibility for, or the amount of, your supplemental security income benefits or your special SSI cash benefits under §416.262, except actions solely involving transitions to eligibility between these types of benefits (see §§416.1403 (a)(13) and (a)(14)).

(b) Suspension, reduction, or termination of your SSI benefits or special SSI cash benefits (see §§416.261 and 416.262) or suspension or termination of your special SSI eligibility status (see §§416.264 through 416.269);

(c) Whether an overpayment of benefits must be repaid to us;

(d) Whether the payment of your benefits will be made, on your behalf, to a representative payee;

(e) Who will act as your payee if we determine that representative payment will be made;

(f) Imposing penalties for failing to report important information;

(g) Your drug addiction or alcoholism;

(h) Whether you are eligible for special SSI eligibility status under §416.265;

(i) Your disability;

(j) Whether your completion of, or continuation for a specified period of time in, an appropriate program of vocational rehabilitation services, employment services, or other support services will increase the likelihood that you will not have to return to the disability or blindness benefit rolls, and thus, whether your benefits may be continued even though you are not disabled or blind;

(k) Whether or not you have a disabling impairment as defined in §416.911;

(l) How much and to whom benefits due a deceased individual will be paid;

(m) A claim for benefits under §416.351 based on alleged misinformation;

(n) Our calculation of the amount of change in your federally administered State supplementary payment amount (*i.e.*, a reduction, suspension, or termination) which results from a mass change, as defined in §416.1401; and

(o) Whether we were negligent in investigating or monitoring or failing to investigate or monitor your representative payee, which resulted in the misuse of benefits by your representative payee.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 47 FR 15325, Apr. 9, 1982; 49 FR 22275, May 29, 1984; 58 FR 52913, Oct. 13, 1993; 59 FR 41405, Aug. 12, 1994; 59 FR 43039, Aug. 22, 1994; 59 FR 44928, Aug. 31, 1994; 60 FR 8153, Feb. 10, 1995; 60 FR 14215, Mar. 15, 1995; 69 FR 60240, Oct. 7, 2004; 70 FR 36509, June 24, 2005; 73 FR 76944, Dec. 18, 2008]

### §416.1403 Administrative actions that are not initial determinations.

(a) Administrative actions that are not initial determinations may be reviewed by us, but they are not subject to the administrative review process provided by this subpart and they are not subject to judicial review. These actions include, but are not limited to, an action about—

(1) Presumptive disability or presumptive blindness;

(2) An emergency advance payment (as defined in §416.520(b));

(3) Denial of a request to be made a representative payee;

(4) Denial of a request to use the expedited appeals process;

(5) Denial of a request to reopen a determination or a decision;

(6) The fee that may be charged or received by a person who has represented you in connection with a proceeding before us;

(7) Refusing to recognize, disqualifying, or suspending a person from acting as your representative in a proceeding before us (see §§416.1505 and 416.1545);

(8) Denying your request to extend the time period for requesting review of a determination or a decision;

(9) Determining whether (and the amount of) travel expenses incurred are reimbursable in connection with proceedings before us;

## § 416.1404

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

(10) Denying your request to readjudicate your claim and apply an Acquiescence Ruling;

(11) Determining whether an organization may collect a fee from you for expenses it incurs in serving as your representative payee (see § 416.640a);

(12) Declining under § 416.351(f) to make a determination on a claim for benefits based on alleged misinformation because one or more of the conditions specified in § 416.351(f) are not met;

(13) Transition to eligibility for special SSI cash benefits (§ 416.262) in a month immediately following a month for which you were eligible for regular SSI benefits;

(14) Transition to eligibility for regular SSI benefits in a month immediately following a month for which you were eligible for special SSI cash benefits (§ 416.262);

(15) The determination to reduce, suspend, or terminate your federally administered State supplementary payments due to a State-initiated mass change, as defined in § 416.1401, in the levels of such payments, except as provided in § 416.1402(n);

(16) Termination of Federal administration of State supplementary payments;

(17) Findings on whether we can collect an overpayment by using the Federal income tax refund offset procedure. (see § 416.583);

(18) Determining whether we will refer information about your overpayment to a consumer reporting agency (see §§ 416.590 and 422.305 of this chapter);

(19) Determining whether we will refer your overpayment to the Department of the Treasury for collection by offset against Federal payments due you (see §§ 416.590 and 422.310 of this chapter);

(20) Determining whether we will order your employer to withhold from your disposable pay to collect an overpayment you received under title XVI of the Social Security Act (see part 422, subpart E, of this chapter);

(21) Determining when provisional benefits are payable, the amount of the provisional benefit payable, and when provisional benefits terminate (see § 416.999c);

(22) Determining whether to select your claim for the quick disability determination process under § 416.1019;

(23) The removal of your claim from the quick disability determination process under § 416.1019;

(24) Starting or discontinuing a continuing disability review; and

(25) Issuing a receipt in response to your report of a change in your earned income.

(26) Determining whether a non-attorney representative is eligible to receive direct fee payment as described in § 416.1517 of this part.

(b) We send some notices of actions that are not initial determinations:

(1) If you receive an emergency advance payment; presumptive disability or presumptive blindness payment, or provisional payment, we will provide a notice explaining the nature and conditions of the payments.

(2) If you receive presumptive disability or presumptive blindness payments, or provisional payments, we shall send you a notice when those payments are exhausted.

(3) If there is a termination of Federal administration of State supplementary payments.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 8809, Mar. 14, 1986; 55 FR 1020, Jan. 11, 1990; 55 FR 4423, Feb. 8, 1990; 57 FR 23058, June 1, 1992; 59 FR 41405, Aug. 12, 1994; 59 FR 43039, Aug. 22, 1994; 59 FR 44928, Aug. 31, 1994; 62 FR 49440, Sept. 22, 1997; 66 FR 67081, Dec. 28, 2001; 68 FR 74184, Dec. 23, 2003; 70 FR 57146, Sept. 30, 2005; 71 FR 16461, Mar. 31, 2006; 71 FR 66859, 66867, Nov. 17, 2006; 72 FR 51178, Sept. 6, 2007; 76 FR 45194, July 28, 2011; 76 FR 80247, Dec. 23, 2011]

### § 416.1404 Notice of the initial determination.

(a) We will mail a written notice of our initial determination to you at your last known address. The written notice will explain in simple and clear language what we have determined and the reasons for and the effect of our determination. If our determination involves a determination of disability that is in whole or in part unfavorable to you, our written notice also will contain in understandable language a statement of the case setting forth the evidence on which our determination is based. The notice also will inform you of your right to reconsideration. We

will not mail a notice if the beneficiary's entitlement to benefits has ended because of his or her death.

(b) If our initial determination is that we must suspend, reduce or terminate your benefits, the notice will also tell you that you have a right to a reconsideration before the determination takes effect (see §416.1336).

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986; 72 FR 51179, Sept. 6, 2007]

**§416.1405 Effect of an initial determination.**

An initial determination is binding unless you request a reconsideration within the stated time period, or we revise the initial determination.

[51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986]

**§416.1406 Testing modifications to the disability determination procedures.**

(a) *Applicability and scope.* Notwithstanding any other provision in this part or part 422 of this chapter, we are establishing the procedures set out in this section to test modifications to our disability determination process. These modifications will enable us to test, either individually or in one or more combinations, the effect of: having disability claim managers assume primary responsibility for processing an application for SSI payments based on disability; providing persons who have applied for benefits based on disability with the opportunity for an interview with a decisionmaker when the decisionmaker finds that the evidence in the file is insufficient to make a fully favorable determination or requires an initial determination denying the claim; having a single decisionmaker make the initial determination with assistance from medical consultants, where appropriate; and eliminating the reconsideration step in the administrative review process and having a claimant who is dissatisfied with the initial determination request a hearing before an administrative law judge. The model procedures we test will be designed to provide us with information regarding the effect of these procedural modifications and enable us to decide whether and to what degree the disability determination process

would be improved if they were implemented on a national level.

(b) *Procedures for cases included in the tests.* Prior to commencing each test or group of tests in selected site(s), we will publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The notice will describe which model or combinations of models we intend to test, where the specific test site(s) will be, and the duration of the test(s). The individuals who participate in the test(s) will be randomly assigned to a test group in each site where the tests are conducted. Paragraph (b) (1) through (4) of this section lists descriptions of each model.

(1) In the disability claim manager model, when you file an application for SSI payments based on disability, a disability claim manager will assume primary responsibility for the processing of your claim. The disability claim manager will be the focal point for your contacts with us during the claims intake process and until an initial determination on your claim is made. The disability claim manager will explain the SSI disability program to you, including the definition of disability and how we determine whether you meet all the requirements for SSI payments based on disability. The disability claim manager will explain what you will be asked to do throughout the claims process and how you can obtain information or assistance through him or her. The disability claim manager will also provide you with information regarding your right to representation, and he or she will provide you with appropriate referral sources for representation. The disability claim manager may be either a State agency employee or a Federal employee. In some instances, the disability claim manager may be assisted by other individuals.

(2) In the single decisionmaker model, the decisionmaker will make the disability determination and may also determine whether the other conditions of eligibility for SSI payments

based on disability are met. The decisionmaker will make the disability determination after any appropriate consultation with a medical or psychological consultant. The medical or psychological consultant will not be required to sign the disability determination forms we use to have the State agency certify the determination of disability to us (see § 416.1015). However, before an initial determination is made that a claimant is not disabled in any case where there is evidence which indicates the existence of a mental impairment, the decisionmaker will make every reasonable effort to ensure that a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist has completed the medical portion of the case review and any applicable residual functional capacity assessment pursuant to our existing procedures (see § 416.1017). Similarly, in making an initial determination with respect to the disability of a child under age 18 claiming SSI payments based on disability, the decisionmaker will make reasonable efforts to ensure that a qualified pediatrician, or other individual who specializes in a field of medicine appropriate to the child's impairment(s), evaluates the claim of such child (see § 416.903(f)). In some instances the decisionmaker may be the disability claim manager described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section. When the decisionmaker is a State agency employee, a team of individuals that includes a Federal employee will determine whether the other conditions of eligibility for SSI payments are met.

(3) In the predecision interview model, if the decisionmaker(s) finds that the evidence in your file is insufficient to make a fully favorable determination or requires an initial determination denying your claim, a predecision notice will be mailed to you. The notice will tell you that, before the decisionmaker(s) makes an initial determination about whether you are disabled, you may request a predecision interview with the decisionmaker(s). The notice will also tell you that you may also submit additional evidence. You must request a predecision interview within 10 days after the date you receive the predecision notice. You must also submit any additional evidence within 10

days after the date you receive the predecision notice. If you request a predecision interview, the decisionmaker(s) will conduct the predecision interview in person, by videoconference, or by telephone as the decisionmaker(s) determines is appropriate under the circumstances. If you make a late request for a predecision interview, or submit additional evidence late, but show in writing that you had good cause under the standards in § 416.1411 for missing the deadline, the decisionmaker(s) will extend the deadline. If you do not request the predecision interview or if you do not appear for a scheduled predecision interview and do not submit additional evidence, or if you do not respond to our attempts to communicate with you, the decisionmaker(s) will make an initial determination based upon the evidence in your file. If you identify additional evidence during the predecision interview, which was previously not available, the decisionmaker(s) will advise you to submit the evidence. If you are unable to do so, the decisionmaker(s) may assist you in obtaining it. The decisionmaker(s) also will advise you of the specific timeframes you have for submitting any additional evidence identified during the predecision interview. If you have no treating source(s) (see § 416.902), or your treating source(s) is unable or unwilling to provide the necessary evidence, or there is a conflict in the evidence that cannot be resolved through evidence from your treating source(s), the decisionmaker(s) may arrange a consultative examination or resolve conflicts according to existing procedures (see § 416.919a). If you attend the predecision interview, or do not attend the predecision interview but you submit additional evidence, the decisionmaker(s) will make an initial determination based on the evidence in your file, including the additional evidence you submit or the evidence obtained as a result of the predecision notice or interview, or both.

(4) In the reconsideration elimination model, we will modify the disability determination process by eliminating the reconsideration step of the administrative review process. If you receive an initial determination on your claim

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1411

for SSI payments based on disability, and you are dissatisfied with the determination, we will notify you that you may request a hearing before an administrative law judge.

[60 FR 20028, Apr. 24, 1995, as amended at 73 FR 2416, Jan. 15, 2008; 76 FR 24812, May 3, 2011]

### RECONSIDERATION

#### § 416.1407 Reconsideration—general.

Reconsideration is the first step in the administrative review process that we provide if you are dissatisfied with the initial determination. If you are dissatisfied with our reconsideration determination, you may request a hearing before an administrative law judge.

[51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986]

#### § 416.1408 Parties to a reconsideration.

(a) *Who may request a reconsideration.* If you are dissatisfied with the initial determination, you may request that we reconsider it. In addition, a person who shows in writing that his or her rights may be adversely affected by the initial determination may request a reconsideration.

(b) *Who are parties to a reconsideration.* After a request for the reconsideration, you and any person who shows in writing that his or her rights are adversely affected by the initial determination will be parties to the reconsideration.

#### § 416.1409 How to request reconsideration.

(a) We shall reconsider an initial determination if you or any other party to the reconsideration files a written request at one of our offices within 60 days after the date you receive notice of the initial determination (or within the extended time period if we extend the time as provided in paragraph (b) of this section).

(b) *Extension of time to request a reconsideration.* If you want a reconsideration of the initial determination but do not request one in time, you may ask us for more time to request a reconsideration. Your request for an extension of time must be in writing and it must give the reasons why the request for reconsideration was not filed

within the stated time period. If you show us that you had good cause for missing the deadline, we will extend the time period. To determine whether good cause exists, we use the standards explained in §416.1411.

#### § 416.1411 Good cause for missing the deadline to request review.

(a) In determining whether you have shown that you have good cause for missing a deadline to request review we consider—

(1) What circumstances kept you from making the request on time;

(2) Whether our action misled you;

(3) Whether you did not understand the requirements of the Act resulting from amendments to the Act, other legislation, or court decisions; and

(4) Whether you had any physical, mental, educational, or linguistic limitations (including any lack of facility with the English language) which prevented you from filing a timely request or from understanding or knowing about the need to file a timely request for review.

(b) Examples of circumstances where good cause may exist include, but are not limited to, the following situations:

(1) You were seriously ill and were prevented from contacting us in person, in writing, or through a friend, relative, or other person.

(2) There was a death or serious illness in your immediate family.

(3) Important records were destroyed or damaged by fire or other accidental cause.

(4) You were trying very hard to find necessary information to support your claim but did not find the information within the stated time periods.

(5) You asked us for additional information explaining our action within the time limit, and within 60 days of receiving the explanation you requested reconsideration or a hearing, or within 30 days of receiving the explanation you requested Appeals Council review or filed a civil suit.

(6) We gave you incorrect or incomplete information about when and how to request administrative review or to file a civil suit.

(7) You did not receive notice of the initial determination or decision.

## § 416.1413

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

(8) You sent the request to another Government agency in good faith within the time limit and the request did not reach us until after the time period had expired.

(9) Unusual or unavoidable circumstances exist, including the circumstances described in paragraph (a)(4) of this section, which show that you could not have known of the need to file timely, or which prevented you from filing timely.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 59 FR 1637, Jan. 12, 1994]

### § 416.1413 Reconsideration procedures.

If you request reconsideration, we will give you a chance to present your case. How you can present your case depends upon the issue involved and whether you are asking us to reconsider an initial determination on an application or an initial determination on a suspension, reduction or termination of benefits. The methods of reconsideration include the following:

(a) *Case review.* We will give you and the other parties to the reconsideration an opportunity to review the evidence in our files and then to present oral and written evidence to us. We will then make a decision based on all of this evidence. The official who reviews the case will make the reconsidered determination.

(b) *Informal conference.* In addition to following the procedures of a case review, an informal conference allows you and the other parties to the reconsideration an opportunity to present witnesses. A summary record of this proceeding will become part of the case record. The official who conducts the informal conference will make the reconsidered determination.

(c) *Formal conference.* In addition to following the procedures of an informal conference, a formal conference allows you and the other parties to a reconsideration an opportunity to request us to subpoena adverse witnesses and relevant documents and to cross-examine adverse witnesses. A summary record of this proceeding will become a part of the case record. The official who conducts the formal conference will make the reconsidered determination.

(d) *Disability hearing.* If you have been receiving supplemental security income benefits because you are blind or disabled and you request reconsideration of an initial or revised determination that, based on medical factors, you are not now blind or disabled, we will give you and the other parties to the reconsideration an opportunity for a disability hearing. (See §§ 416.1414 through 416.1418.)

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986]

### § 416.1413a Reconsiderations of initial determinations on applications.

The method of reconsideration we will use when you appeal an initial determination on your application for benefits depends on the issue involved in your case.

(a) *Nonmedical issues.* If you challenge our finding on a nonmedical issue, we shall offer you a case review or an informal conference, and will reach our reconsidered determination on the basis of the review you select.

(b) *Medical issues.* If you challenge our finding on a medical issue (even if you received payments because we presumed you were blind or disabled), we shall reach our reconsidered determination on the basis of a case review.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980. Redesignated at 51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986]

### § 416.1413b Reconsideration procedures for post-eligibility claims.

If you are eligible for supplemental security income benefits and we notify you that we are going to suspend, reduce or terminate your benefits, you can appeal our determination within 60 days of the date you receive our notice. The 60-day period may be extended if you have good cause for an extension of time under the conditions stated in § 416.1411(b). If you appeal a suspension, reduction, or termination of benefits, the method of reconsideration we will use depends on the issue in your case. If the issue in your case is that you are no longer blind or disabled for medical reasons, you will receive an opportunity for a disability hearing. If any other issue is involved, you have the



## Social Security Administration

## §416.1415

choice of a case review, informal conference or formal conference.

[51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986]

### §416.1413c Arrangement for conferences.

(a) As soon as we receive a request for a formal or informal conference, we shall set the time, date and place for the conference.

(b) We shall send you and any other parties to the reconsideration a written notice about the conference (either by mailing it to your last known address or by personally serving you with it) at least 10 days before the conference. However, we may hold the conference sooner if we all agree. We will not send written notice of the time, date, and place of the conference if you waive your right to receive it.

(c) We shall schedule the conference within 15 days after you request it, but, at our discretion or at your request, we will delay the conference if we think the delay will ensure that the conference is conducted efficiently and properly.

(d) We shall hold the conference at one of our offices, by telephone or in person, whichever you prefer. We will hold the conference elsewhere in person if you show circumstances that make this arrangement reasonably necessary.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980. Redesignated at 51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986]

### §416.1414 Disability hearing—general.

(a) *Availability.* We will provide you with an opportunity for a disability hearing if:

(1) You have been receiving supplemental security income benefits based on a medical impairment that renders you blind or disabled;

(2) We have made an initial or revised determination based on medical factors that you are not blind or disabled because your impairment:

- (i) Has ceased;
- (ii) Did not exist; or
- (iii) Is no longer disabling; and

(3) You make a timely request for reconsideration of the initial or revised determination.

(b) *Scope.* The disability hearing will address only the initial or revised de-

termination, based on medical factors, that you are not now blind or disabled. Any other issues you raise in connection with your request for reconsideration will be reviewed in accordance with the reconsideration procedures described in §416.1413 (a) through (c).

(c) *Time and place*—(1) *General.* Either the State agency or the Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate, as appropriate, will set the time and place of your disability hearing. We will send you a notice of the time and place of your disability hearing at least 20 days before the date of the hearing. You may be expected to travel to your disability hearing. (See §§416.1495–416.1499 regarding reimbursement for travel expenses.)

(2) *Change of time or place.* If you are unable to travel or have some other reason why you cannot attend your disability hearing at the scheduled time or place, you should request at the earliest possible date that the time or place of your hearing be changed. We will change the time or place if there is good cause for doing so under the standards in §416.1436 (c) and (d).

(d) *Combined issues.* If a disability hearing is available to you under paragraph (a) of this section, and you file a new application for benefits while your request for reconsideration is still pending, we may combine the issues on both claims for the purpose of the disability hearing and issue a combined initial/reconsidered determination which is binding with respect to the common issues on both claims.

(e) *Definition.* For purposes of the provisions regarding disability hearings (§§416.1414 through 416.1418) *we, us, or our* means the Social Security Administration or the State agency.

[51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986, as amended at 51 FR 8809, Mar. 14, 1986; 71 FR 10432, Mar. 1, 2006]

### §416.1415 Disability hearing—disability hearing officers.

(a) *General.* Your disability hearing will be conducted by a disability hearing officer who was not involved in making the determination you are appealing. The disability hearing officer will be an experienced disability examiner, regardless of whether he or she is appointed by a State agency or by the

Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate, as described in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

(b) *State agency hearing officers*—(1) *Appointment of State agency hearing officers.* If a State agency made the initial or revised determination that you are appealing, the disability hearing officer who conducts your disability hearing may be appointed by a State agency. If the disability hearing officer is appointed by a State agency, that individual will be employed by an adjudicatory unit of the State agency other than the adjudicatory unit which made the determination you are appealing.

(2) *State agency defined.* For purposes of this subpart, *State agency* means the adjudicatory component in the State which issues disability determinations.

(c) *Federal hearing officers.* The disability hearing officer who conducts your disability hearing will be appointed by the Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate if:

(1) A component of our office other than a State agency made the determination you are appealing; or

(2) The State agency does not appoint a disability hearing officer to conduct your disability hearing under paragraph (b) of this section.

[51 FR 305, Jan. 3, 1986, as amended at 71 FR 10432, Mar. 1, 2006]

**§416.1416 Disability hearing—procedures.**

(a) *General.* The disability hearing will enable you to introduce evidence and present your views to a disability hearing officer if you are dissatisfied with an initial or revised determination, based on medical factors, that you are not now blind or disabled, as described in §416.1414(a)(2).

(b) *Your procedural rights.* We will advise you that you have the following procedural rights in connection with the disability hearing process:

(1) You may request that we assist you in obtaining pertinent evidence for your disability hearing and, if necessary, that we issue a subpoena to compel the production of certain evidence or testimony. We will follow subpoena procedures similar to those de-

scribed in §416.1450(d) for the administrative law judge hearing process;

(2) You may have a representative at the hearing appointed under subpart O of this part, or you may represent yourself;

(3) You or your representative may review the evidence in your case file, either on the date of your hearing or at an earlier time at your request, and present additional evidence;

(4) You may present witnesses and question any witnesses at the hearing; and

(5) You may waive your right to appear at the hearing. If you do not appear at the hearing, the disability hearing officer will prepare and issue a written reconsidered determination based on the information in your case file.

(c) *Case preparation.* After you request reconsideration, your case file will be reviewed and prepared for the hearing. This review will be conducted in the component of our office (including a State agency) that made the initial or revised determination, by personnel who were not involved in making the initial or revised determination. Any new evidence you submit in connection with your request for reconsideration will be included in this review. If necessary, further development of evidence, including arrangements for medical examinations, will be undertaken by this component. After the case file is prepared for the hearing, it will be forwarded by this component to the disability hearing officer for a hearing. If necessary, the case file may be sent back to this component at any time prior to the issuance of the reconsidered determination for additional development. Under paragraph (d) of this section, this component has the authority to issue a favorable reconsidered determination at any time in its development process.

(d) *Favorable reconsidered determination without a hearing.* If the evidence in your case file supports a finding that you are now blind or disabled, either the component that prepares your case for hearing under paragraph (c) or the disability hearing officer will issue a

written favorable reconsidered determination, even if a disability hearing has not yet been held.

(e) *Opportunity to submit additional evidence after the hearing.* At your request, the disability hearing officer may allow up to 15 days after your disability hearing for receipt of evidence which is not available at the hearing, if:

(1) The disability hearing officer determines that the evidence has a direct bearing on the outcome of the hearing; and

(2) The evidence could not have been obtained before the hearing.

(f) *Opportunity to review and comment on evidence obtained or developed by us after the hearing.* If, for any reason, additional evidence is obtained or developed by us after your disability hearing, and all evidence taken together can be used to support a reconsidered determination that is unfavorable to you with regard to the medical factors of eligibility, we will notify you, in writing, and give you an opportunity to review and comment on the additional evidence. You will be given 10 days from the date you receive our notice to submit your comments (in writing or, in appropriate cases, by telephone), unless there is good cause for granting you additional time, as illustrated by the examples in §416.1411(b). Your comments will be considered before a reconsidered determination is issued. If you believe that it is necessary to have further opportunity for a hearing with respect to the additional evidence, a supplementary hearing may be scheduled at your request. Otherwise, we will ask for your written comments on the additional evidence, or, in appropriate cases, for your telephone comments.

[51 FR 306, Jan. 3, 1986]

**§416.1417 Disability hearing—disability hearing officer's reconsidered determination.**

(a) *General.* The disability hearing officer who conducts your disability hearing will prepare and will issue a written reconsidered determination, unless:

(1) The disability hearing officer sends the case back for additional development by the component that pre-

pared the case for the hearing, and that component issues a favorable determination, as permitted by §416.1416(c);

(2) It is determined that you are engaging in substantial gainful activity and that you are therefore not disabled; or

(3) The reconsidered determination prepared by the disability hearing officer is reviewed under §416.1418.

(b) *Content.* The disability hearing officer's reconsidered determination will give the findings of fact and the reasons for the reconsidered determination. The disability hearing officer must base the reconsidered determination on the preponderance of the evidence offered at the disability hearing or otherwise included in your case file.

(c) *Notice.* We will mail you and the other parties a notice of reconsidered determination in accordance with §416.1422.

(d) *Effect.* The disability hearing officer's reconsidered determination, or, if it is changed under §416.1418, the reconsidered determination that is issued by the Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate, is binding in accordance with §416.1421, subject to the exceptions specified in that section.

[51 FR 306, Jan. 3, 1986, as amended at 71 FR 10432, Mar. 1, 2006; 73 FR 76944, Dec. 18, 2008]

**§416.1418 Disability hearing—review of the disability hearing officer's reconsidered determination before it is issued.**

(a) *General.* The Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate may select a sample of disability hearing officers' reconsidered determinations, before they are issued, and review any such case to determine its correctness on any grounds he or she deems appropriate. The Associate Commissioner or his or her delegate shall review any case within the sample if:

(1) There appears to be an abuse of discretion by the hearing officer;

(2) There is an error of law; or

(3) The action, findings or conclusions of the disability hearing officer are not supported by substantial evidence.

NOTE TO PARAGRAPH (a): If the review indicates that the reconsidered determination

prepared by the disability hearing officer is correct, it will be dated and issued immediately upon completion of the review. If the reconsidered determination prepared by the disability hearing officer is found by the Associate Commissioner or his or her delegate to be deficient, it will be changed as described in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Methods of correcting deficiencies in the disability hearing officer's reconsidered determination.* If the reconsidered determination prepared by the disability hearing officer is found by the Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate to be deficient, the Associate Commissioner or his or her delegate will take appropriate action to assure that the deficiency is corrected before a reconsidered determination is issued. The action taken by the Associate Commissioner or his or her delegate will take one of two forms:

(1) The Associate Commissioner or his or her delegate may return the case file either to the component responsible for preparing the case for hearing or to the disability hearing officer, for appropriate further action; or

(2) The Associate Commissioner or his or her delegate may issue a written reconsidered determination which corrects the deficiency.

(c) *Further action on your case if it is sent back by the Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate either to the component that prepared your case for hearing or to the disability hearing officer.* If the Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate sends your case back either to the component responsible for preparing the case for hearing or to the disability hearing officer for appropriate further action, as provided in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, any additional proceedings in your case will be governed by the disability hearing procedures described in §416.1416(f) or if your case is returned to the disability hearing officer and an unfavorable determination is indicated, a supplementary hearing may be scheduled for you before a reconsidered determination is reached in your case.

(d) *Opportunity to comment before the Associate Commissioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate issues a reconsidered determination that is unfavorable to you.* If the Associate Com-

missioner for Disability Determinations or his or her delegate proposes to issue a reconsidered determination as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, and that reconsidered determination is unfavorable to you, he or she will send you a copy of the proposed reconsidered determination with an explanation of the reasons for it, and will give you an opportunity to submit written comments before it is issued. At your request, you will also be given an opportunity to inspect the pertinent materials in your case file, including the reconsidered determination prepared by the disability hearing officer, before submitting your comments. You will be given 10 days from the date you receive the Associate Commissioner's notice of proposed action to submit your written comments, unless additional time is necessary to provide access to the pertinent file materials or there is good cause for providing more time, as illustrated by the examples in §416.1411(b). The Associate Commissioner or his or her delegate will consider your comments before taking any further action on your case.

[71 FR 10432, Mar. 1, 2006]

**§416.1419 Notice of another person's request for reconsideration.**

If any other person files a request for reconsideration of the initial determination in your case, we shall notify you at your last known address before we reconsider the initial determination. We shall also give you an opportunity to present any evidence you think helpful to the reconsidered determination.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980. Redesignated at 51 FR 306, Jan. 3, 1986]

**§416.1420 Reconsidered determination.**

After you or another person requests a reconsideration, we will review the evidence we considered in making the initial determination and any other evidence we receive. We will make our determination based on the preponderance of the evidence. The person who makes the reconsidered determination will have had no prior involvement with the initial determination.

[73 FR 76945, Dec. 18, 2008]

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1426

### §416.1421 Effect of a reconsidered determination.

The reconsidered determination is binding unless—

(a) You or any other party to the reconsideration requests a hearing before an administrative law judge within the stated time period and a decision is made;

(b) The expedited appeals process is used; or

(c) The reconsidered determination is revised.

[51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986]

### §416.1422 Notice of a reconsidered determination.

We shall mail a written notice of the reconsidered determination to the parties at their last known address. We shall state the specific reasons for the determination and tell you and any other parties of the right to a hearing. If it is appropriate, we will also tell you and any other parties how to use the expedited appeals process.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980. Redesignated at 51 FR 306, Jan. 3, 1986]

## EXPEDITED APPEALS PROCESS

### §416.1423 Expedited appeals process—general.

By using the expedited appeals process you may go directly to a Federal district court without first completing the administrative review process that is generally required before the court will hear your case.

### §416.1424 When the expedited appeals process may be used.

You may use the expedited appeals process if all of the following requirements are met:

(a) We have made an initial and a reconsidered determination; an administrative law judge has made a hearing decision; or Appeals Council review has been requested, but a final decision has not been issued.

(b) You are a party to the reconsidered determination or the hearing decision.

(c) You have submitted a written request for the expedited appeals process.

(d) You have claimed, and we agree, that the only factor preventing a favor-

able determination or decision is a provision in the law that you believe is unconstitutional.

(e) If you are not the only party, all parties to the determination or decision agree to request the expedited appeals process.

### §416.1425 How to request expedited appeals process.

(a) *Time of filing request.* You may request the expedited appeals process—

(1) Within 60 days after the date you receive notice of the reconsidered determination (or within the extended time period if we extend the time as provided in paragraph (c) of this section);

(2) At any time after you have filed a timely request for a hearing but before you receive notice of the administrative law judge's decision;

(3) Within 60 days after the date you receive a notice of the administrative law judge's decision or dismissal (or within the extended time period if we extend the time as provided in paragraph (c) of this section); or

(4) At any time after you have filed a timely request for Appeals Council review, but before you receive notice of the Appeals Council's action.

(b) *Place of filing request.* You may file a written request for the expedited appeals process at one of our offices.

(c) *Extension of time to request expedited appeals process.* If you want to use the expedited appeals process but do not request it within the stated time period, you may ask for more time to submit your request. Your request for an extension of time must be in writing and it must give the reasons why the request for the expedited appeals process was not filed within the stated time period. If you show that you had good cause for missing the deadline, the time period will be extended. To determine whether good cause exists, we use the standards explained in §416.1411.

### §416.1426 Agreement in expedited appeals process.

If you meet all the requirements necessary for the use of the expedited appeals process, our authorized representative shall prepare an agreement. The agreement must be signed by you, by every other party to the determination

#### § 416.1427

or decision, and by our authorized representative. The agreement must provide that—

(a) The facts in your claim are not in dispute;

(b) The sole issue in dispute is whether a provision of the Act that applies to your case is unconstitutional;

(c) Except for your belief that a provision of the Act is unconstitutional, you agree with our interpretation of the law;

(d) If the provision of the Act that you believe is unconstitutional were not applied to your case, your claim would be allowed; and

(e) Our determination or the decision is final for the purpose of seeking judicial review.

#### **§ 416.1427 Effect of expedited appeals process agreement.**

After an expedited appeals process agreement is signed, you will not need to complete the remaining steps of the administrative review process. Instead, you may file an action in a Federal district court within 60 days after the date you receive notice (a signed copy of the agreement will be mailed to you and will constitute notice) that the agreement has been signed by our authorized representative.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 49 FR 46370, Nov. 26, 1984]

#### **§ 416.1428 Expedited appeals process request that does not result in agreement.**

If you do not meet all of the requirements necessary to use the expedited appeals process, we shall tell you that your request to use this process is denied and that your request will be considered as a request for a hearing, or Appeals Council review, whichever is appropriate.

#### HEARING BEFORE AN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE

#### **§ 416.1429 Hearing before an administrative law judge—general.**

If you are dissatisfied with one of the determinations or decisions listed in § 416.1430 you may request a hearing. The Associate Commissioner for Hearings and Appeals, or his or her delegate, shall appoint an administrative

#### 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

law judge to conduct the hearing. If circumstances warrant, the Associate Commissioner, or his or her delegate, may assign your case to another administrative law judge. At the hearing you may appear in person or by video teleconferencing, submit new evidence, examine the evidence used in making the determination or decision under review, and present and question witnesses. The administrative law judge who conducts the hearing may ask you questions. He or she shall issue a decision based on the hearing record. If you waive your right to appear at the hearing, either in person or by video teleconferencing, the administrative law judge will make a decision based on the evidence that is in the file and any new evidence that may have been submitted for consideration.

[68 FR 5219, Feb. 3, 2003]

#### **§ 416.1430 Availability of a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

(a) You or another party may request a hearing before an administrative law judge if we have made—

(1) A reconsidered determination;

(2) A reconsideration of a revised determination of an initial or reconsidered determination that involves a suspension, reduction or termination of benefits;

(3) A revised initial determination or revised reconsidered determination that does not involve a suspension, reduction or termination of benefits; or

(4) A revised decision based on evidence not included in the record on which the prior decision was based.

(b) We will hold a hearing only if you or another party to the hearing file a written request for a hearing.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986; 73 FR 2416, Jan. 15, 2008; 76 FR 24812, May 3, 2011]

#### **§ 416.1432 Parties to a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

(a) *Who may request a hearing.* You may request a hearing if a hearing is available under § 416.1430. In addition, a person who shows in writing that his or her rights may be adversely affected by the decision may request a hearing.

(b) *Who are parties to a hearing.* After a request for a hearing is made, you,

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1436

the other parties to the initial, reconsidered, or revised determination, and any other person who shows in writing that his or her rights may be adversely affected by the hearing, are parties to the hearing. In addition, any other person may be made a party to the hearing if his or her rights may be adversely affected by the decision, and we notify the person to appear at the hearing or to present evidence supporting his or her interest.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986; 75 FR 39160, July 8, 2010]

### **§416.1433 How to request a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

(a) *Written request.* You may request a hearing by filing a written request. You should include in your request—

(1) Your name and social security number;

(2) The name and social security number of your spouse, if any;

(3) The reasons you disagree with the previous determination or decision;

(4) A statement of additional evidence to be submitted and the date you will submit it; and

(5) The name and address of any designated representative.

(b) *When and where to file.* The request must be filed at one of our offices within 60 days after the date you receive notice of the previous determination or decision (or within the extended time period if we extend the time as provided in paragraph (c) of this section).

(c) *Extension of time to request a hearing.* If you have a right to a hearing but do not request one in time, you may ask for more time to make your request. The request for an extension of time must be in writing and it must give the reasons why the request for a hearing was not filed within the stated time period. You may file your request for an extension of time at one of our offices. If you show that you had good cause for missing the deadline, the time period will be extended. To determine whether good cause exists, we use the standards explained in §416.1411.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986]

### **§416.1435 Submitting evidence prior to a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

If possible, the evidence or a summary of evidence you wish to have considered at the hearing should be submitted to the administrative law judge with the request for hearing or within 10 days after filing the request. Each party shall make every effort to be sure that all material evidence is received by the administrative law judge or is available at the time and place set for the hearing.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986]

### **§416.1436 Time and place for a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

(a) *General.* We may set the time and place for any hearing. We may change the time and place, if it is necessary. After sending you reasonable notice of the proposed action, the administrative law judge may adjourn or postpone the hearing or reopen it to receive additional evidence any time before he or she notifies you of a hearing decision.

(b) *Where we hold hearings.* We hold hearings in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The “place” of the hearing is the hearing office or other site(s) at which you and any other parties to the hearing are located when you make your appearance(s) before the administrative law judge, whether in person or by video teleconferencing.

(c) *Determination how appearances will be made.* In setting the time and place of the hearing, we will consider the following:

(1) We will consult with the administrative law judge to determine the status of case preparation and to determine whether your appearance, or the appearance of any other party to the hearing, will be made in person or by video teleconferencing. The administrative law judge will determine that your appearance, or the appearance of any other party to the hearing, be conducted by video teleconferencing if video teleconferencing equipment is available to conduct the appearance, use of video teleconferencing to conduct the appearance would be more efficient than conducting the appearance

in person, and the administrative law judge determines there is no circumstance in the particular case that prevents the use of video teleconferencing to conduct the appearance. You or any other party to the hearing may request to appear at the hearing by telephone. The administrative law judge will allow you or any other party to the hearing to appear by telephone if the administrative law judge determines that extraordinary circumstances prevent you or the other party who makes the request from appearing at your hearing in person or by video teleconferencing.

(2) The administrative law judge will determine whether any person, other than you or any other party to the hearing, including a medical expert or a vocational expert, will appear at the hearing in person, by video teleconferencing, or by telephone. If you or any other party to the hearing objects to any other person appearing by video teleconferencing or by telephone, the administrative law judge will decide, either in writing or at the hearing, whether to have that person appear in person, by video teleconferencing, or by telephone. The administrative law judge will direct a person, other than you or any other party to the hearing if we are notified as provided in paragraph (e) of this section that you or any other party to the hearing objects to appearing by video teleconferencing, to appear by video teleconferencing or telephone when the administrative law judge determines:

(i) Video teleconferencing or telephone equipment is available,

(ii) Use of video teleconferencing or telephone equipment would be more efficient than conducting an examination of a witness in person, and

(iii) The administrative law judge determines there is no other reason why video teleconferencing or telephone should not be used.

(d) *Objecting to the time or place of the hearing.* If you object to the time or place of your hearing, you must notify us at the earliest possible opportunity before the time set for the hearing. You must state the reason for your objection and state the time and place you want the hearing to be held. If at all possible, the request should be in

writing. We will change the time or place of the hearing if the administrative law judge finds you have good cause, as determined under paragraphs (e) and (f) of this section. Section 416.1438 provides procedures we will follow when you do not respond to a notice of hearing.

(e) *Good cause for changing the time or place.* If you have been scheduled to appear for your hearing by video teleconferencing and you notify us as provided in paragraph (d) of this section that you object to appearing in that way, the administrative law judge will find your wish not to appear by video teleconferencing to be a good reason for changing the time or place of your scheduled hearing and we will reschedule your hearing for a time and place at which you may make your appearance before the administrative law judge in person. The administrative law judge will also find good cause for changing the time or place of your scheduled hearing, and we will reschedule your hearing, if your reason is one of the following circumstances and is supported by the evidence:

(1) You or your representative are unable to attend or to travel to the scheduled hearing because of a serious physical or mental condition, incapacitating injury, or death in the family; or

(2) Severe weather conditions make it impossible to travel to the hearing.

(f) *Good cause in other circumstances.* In determining whether good cause exists in circumstances other than those set out in paragraph (e) of this section, the administrative law judge will consider your reason for requesting the change, the facts supporting it, and the impact of the proposed change on the efficient administration of the hearing process. Factors affecting the impact of the change include, but are not limited to, the effect on the processing of other scheduled hearings, delays which might occur in rescheduling your hearing, and whether any prior changes were granted to you. Examples of such other circumstances, which you might give for requesting a change in the time or place of the hearing, include, but are not limited to, the following:



## Social Security Administration

## §416.1437

(1) You have attempted to obtain a representative but need additional time;

(2) Your representative was appointed within 30 days of the scheduled hearing and needs additional time to prepare for the hearing;

(3) Your representative has a prior commitment to be in court or at another administrative hearing on the date scheduled for the hearing;

(4) A witness who will testify to facts material to your case would be unavailable to attend the scheduled hearing and the evidence cannot be otherwise obtained;

(5) Transportation is not readily available for you to travel to the hearing;

(6) You live closer to another hearing site; or

(7) You are unrepresented, and you are unable to respond to the notice of hearing because of any physical, mental, educational, or linguistic limitations (including any lack of facility with the English language) which you may have.

(g) *Consultation procedures.* Before we exercise the authority to set the time and place for an administrative law judge's hearings, we will consult with the appropriate hearing office chief administrative law judge to determine if there are any reasons why we should not set the time and place of the administrative law judge's hearings. If the hearing office chief administrative law judge does not state a reason that we believe justifies the limited number of hearings scheduled by the administrative law judge, we will then consult with the administrative law judge before deciding whether to begin to exercise our authority to set the time and place for the administrative law judge's hearings. If the hearing office chief administrative law judge states a reason that we believe justifies the limited number of hearings scheduled by the administrative law judge, we will not exercise our authority to set the time and place for the administrative law judge's hearings. We will work with the hearing office chief administrative law judge to identify those circumstances where we can assist the administrative law judge and address any

impediment that may affect the scheduling of hearings.

(h) *Pilot program.* The provisions of the first and second sentences of paragraph (a), the first sentence of paragraph (c)(1), and paragraph (g) of this section are a pilot program. These provisions will no longer be effective on August 9, 2014, unless we terminate them earlier or extend them beyond that date by notice of a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

[68 FR 5220, Feb. 3, 2003, as amended at 75 FR 39161, July 8, 2010; 78 FR 29628, May 21, 2013; 78 FR 45452, July 29, 2013]

### **§416.1437 Protecting the safety of the public and our employees in our hearing process.**

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision in this part or part 422 of this chapter, we are establishing the procedures set out in this section to ensure the safety of the public and our employees in our hearing process.

(b)(1) At the request of any hearing office employee, the Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judge will determine, after consultation with the presiding administrative law judge, whether a claimant or other individual poses a reasonable threat to the safety of our employees or other participants in the hearing. The Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judge will find that a claimant or other individual poses a threat to the safety of our employees or other participants in the hearing when he or she determines that the individual has made a threat and there is a reasonable likelihood that the claimant or other individual could act on the threat or when evidence suggests that a claimant or other individual poses a threat. In making a finding under this paragraph, the Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judge will consider all relevant evidence, including any information we have in the claimant's record and any information we have regarding the claimant's or other individual's past conduct.

(2) If the Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judge determines that the claimant or other individual poses a reasonable threat to the safety of our employees or other participants in the

## §416.1438

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

hearing, the Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judge will either:

(i) Require the presence of a security guard at the hearing; or

(ii) Require that the hearing be conducted by video teleconference or by telephone.

(c) If we have banned a claimant from any of our facilities, we will provide the claimant with the opportunity for a hearing that will be conducted by telephone.

(d) The actions of the Hearing Office Chief Administrative Law Judge taken under this section are final and not subject to further review.

[76 FR 13508, Mar. 14, 2011, as amended at 77 FR 10658, Feb. 23, 2012]

### **§416.1438 Notice of a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

(a) *Issuing the notice.* After we set the time and place of the hearing, we will mail notice of the hearing to you at your last known address, or give the notice to you by personal service, unless you have indicated in writing that you do not wish to receive this notice. The notice will be mailed or served at least 20 days before the hearing.

(b) *Notice information.* The notice of hearing will contain a statement of the specific issues to be decided and tell you that you may designate a person to represent you during the proceedings. The notice will also contain an explanation of the procedures for requesting a change in the time or place of your hearing, a reminder that if you fail to appear at your scheduled hearing without good cause the administrative law judge may dismiss your hearing request, and other information about the scheduling and conduct of your hearing. You will also be told if your appearance or that of any other person is scheduled to be made in person, by video teleconferencing, or, for a person other than you or any other party to the hearing, by telephone. If we have scheduled you to appear at the hearing by video teleconferencing, the notice of hearing will tell you the scheduled place for the hearing is a video teleconferencing site and explain what it means to appear at your hearing by video teleconferencing. The notice will also tell you how you may let us know if you do not want to appear by video

teleconferencing and want, instead, to have your hearing at a time and place where you may appear in person before the administrative law judge. The notice will also tell you that you may ask us if you want to appear by telephone, and that the administrative law judge will grant your request if he or she determines that extraordinary circumstances prevent you from appearing in person or by video teleconferencing.

(c) *Acknowledging the notice of hearing.* The notice of hearing will ask you to return a form to let us know that you received the notice. If you or your representative do not acknowledge receipt of the notice of hearing, we will attempt to contact you for an explanation. If you tell us that you did not receive the notice of hearing, an amended notice will be sent to you by certified mail. See §416.1436 for the procedures we will follow in deciding whether the time or place of your scheduled hearing will be changed if you do not respond to the notice of hearing.

[68 FR 5220, Feb. 3, 2003, as amended at 75 FR 39161, July 8, 2010; 78 FR 29628, May 21, 2013]

### **§416.1439 Objections to the issues.**

If you object to the issues to be decided upon at the hearing, you must notify the administrative law judge in writing at the earliest possible opportunity before the time set for the hearing. You must state the reasons for your objections. The administrative law judge shall make a decision on your objections either in writing or at the hearing.

### **§416.1440 Disqualification of the administrative law judge.**

An administrative law judge shall not conduct a hearing if he or she is prejudiced or partial with respect to any party or has any interest in the matter pending for decision. If you object to the administrative law judge who will conduct the hearing, you must notify the administrative law judge at your earliest opportunity. The administrative law judge shall consider your objections and shall decide whether to proceed with the hearing or withdraw. If he or she withdraws, the Associate Commissioner for Hearings and

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1442

Appeals, or his or her delegate, will appoint another administrative law judge to conduct the hearing. If the administrative law judge does not withdraw, you may, after the hearing, present your objections to the Appeals Council as reasons why the hearing decision should be revised or a new hearing held before another administrative law judge.

### §416.1441 Prehearing case review.

(a) *General.* After a hearing is requested but before it is held, we may, for the purposes of a prehearing case review, forward the case to the component of our office (including a State agency) that issued the determination being reviewed. That component will decide whether it should revise the determination based on the preponderance of the evidence. A revised determination may be fully or partially favorable to you. A prehearing case review will not delay the scheduling of a hearing unless you agree to continue the review and delay the hearing. If the prehearing case review is not completed before the date of the hearing, the case will be sent to the administrative law judge unless a favorable revised determination is in process or you and the other parties to the hearing agree in writing to delay the hearing until the review is completed.

(b) *When a prehearing case review may be conducted.* We may conduct a prehearing case review if—

- (1) Additional evidence is submitted;
- (2) There is an indication that additional evidence is available;
- (3) There is a change in the law or regulation; or
- (4) There is an error in the file or some other indication that the prior determination may be revised.

(c) *Notice of a prehearing revised determination.* If we revise the determination in a prehearing case review, we will mail a written notice of the revised determination to all parties at their last known addresses. We will state the basis for the revised determination and advise all parties of the effect of the revised determination on the request for a hearing.

(d) *Effect of a fully favorable revised determination.* If the revised determination is fully favorable to you, we will

tell you in the notice that an administrative law judge will dismiss the request for a hearing. We will also tell you that you or another party to the hearing may request that the administrative law judge vacate the dismissal and reinstate the request for a hearing if you or another party to the hearing disagrees with the revised determination for any reason. If you wish to make this request, you must do so in writing and send it to us within 60 days of the date you receive notice of the dismissal. If the request is timely, an administrative law judge will vacate the dismissal, reinstate the request for a hearing, and offer you and all parties an opportunity for a hearing. The administrative law judge will extend the time limit if you show that you had good cause for missing the deadline. The administrative law judge will use the standards in §416.1411 to determine whether you had good cause.

(e) *Effect of a partially favorable revised determination.* If the revised determination is partially favorable to you, we will tell you in the notice what was not favorable. We will also tell you that an administrative law judge will hold the hearing you requested unless you and all other parties to the hearing agree in writing to dismiss the request for a hearing. An administrative law judge will dismiss the request for a hearing if we receive the written statement(s) agreeing to dismiss the request for a hearing before an administrative law judge mails a notice of his or her hearing decision.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 73 FR 76945, Dec. 18, 2008; 75 FR 33169, June 11, 2010; 76 FR 65370, Oct. 21, 2011]

### §416.1442 Prehearing proceedings and decisions by attorney advisors.

(a) *General.* After a hearing is requested but before it is held, an attorney advisor may conduct prehearing proceedings as set out in paragraph (c) of this section. If after the completion of these proceedings we can make a decision that is fully favorable to you and all other parties based on the preponderance of the evidence, an attorney advisor, instead of an administrative law judge, may issue the decision. The conduct of the prehearing proceedings by the attorney advisor will

## § 416.1443

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

not delay the scheduling of a hearing. If the prehearing proceedings are not completed before the date of the hearing, the case will be sent to the administrative law judge unless a fully favorable decision is in process or you and all other parties to the hearing agree in writing to delay the hearing until the proceedings are completed.

(b) *When prehearing proceedings may be conducted by an attorney advisor.* An attorney advisor may conduct prehearing proceedings if you have filed a claim for SSI benefits based on disability and—

(1) New and material evidence is submitted;

(2) There is an indication that additional evidence is available;

(3) There is a change in the law or regulations; or

(4) There is an error in the file or some other indication that a fully favorable decision may be issued.

(c) *Nature of the prehearing proceedings that may be conducted by an attorney advisor.* As part of the prehearing proceedings, the attorney advisor, in addition to reviewing the existing record, may—

(1) Request additional evidence that may be relevant to the claim, including medical evidence; and

(2) If necessary to clarify the record for the purpose of determining if a fully favorable decision is warranted, schedule a conference with the parties.

(d) *Notice of a decision by an attorney advisor.* If an attorney advisor issues a fully favorable decision under this section, we will mail a written notice of the decision to all parties at their last known addresses. We will state the basis for the decision and advise all parties that they may request that an administrative law judge reinstate the request for a hearing if they disagree with the decision for any reason. Any party who wants to make this request must do so in writing and send it to us within 60 days of the date he or she receives notice of the decision. The administrative law judge will extend the time limit if the requestor shows good cause for missing the deadline. The administrative law judge will use the standards in § 416.1411 to determine whether there is good cause. If the request is timely, an administrative law

judge will reinstate the request for a hearing and offer all parties an opportunity for a hearing.

(e) *Effect of an attorney advisor's decision.* An attorney advisor's decision under this section is binding unless—

(1) You or another party to the hearing submits a timely request that an administrative law judge reinstate the request for a hearing under paragraph (d) of this section;

(2) The Appeals Council reviews the decision on its own motion pursuant to § 416.1469 as explained in paragraph (f)(3) of this section; or

(3) The decision of the attorney advisor is revised under the procedures explained in § 416.1487.

(f) *Ancillary provisions.* For the purposes of the procedures authorized by this section, the regulations of part 416 shall apply to—

(1) Authorize an attorney advisor to exercise the functions performed by an administrative law judge under §§ 416.920a, 416.924(g), 416.926, 416.926a(n), 416.927, and 416.946;

(2) Define the term “decision” to include a decision made by an attorney advisor, as well as the decisions identified in § 416.1401; and

(3) Make the decision of an attorney advisor under paragraph (d) of this section subject to review by the Appeals Council if the Appeals Council decides to review the decision of the attorney advisor anytime within 60 days after the date of the decision under § 416.1469.

(g) *Sunset provision.* The provisions of this section will no longer be effective on August 7, 2015, unless we terminate them earlier or extend them beyond that date by notice of a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

[60 FR 34132, June 30, 1995, as amended at 63 FR 35516, June 30, 1998; 64 FR 13678, Mar. 22, 1999; 64 FR 51894, Sept. 27, 1999; 65 FR 16815, Mar. 30, 2000; 72 FR 44765, Aug. 9, 2007; 73 FR 76945, Dec. 18, 2008; 74 FR 33328, July 13, 2009; 76 FR 18384, Apr. 4, 2011; 76 FR 65371, Oct. 21, 2011; 78 FR 45460, July 29, 2013]

### § 416.1443 Responsibilities of the adjudication officer.

(a)(1) *General.* Under the procedures set out in this section we will test modifications to the procedures we follow when you file a request for a hearing before an administrative law judge in connection with a claim for benefits

based on disability where the question of whether you are under a disability as defined in §§416.905 and 416.906 is at issue. These modifications will enable us to test the effect of having an adjudication officer be your primary point of contact after you file a hearing request and before you have a hearing with an administrative law judge. The tests may be conducted alone, or in combination with the tests of the modifications to the disability determination procedures which we conduct under §416.1406. The adjudication officer, working with you and your representative, if any, will identify issues in dispute, develop evidence, conduct informal conferences, and conduct any other prehearing proceeding as may be necessary. The adjudication officer has the authority to make a decision fully favorable to you if the evidence so warrants. If the adjudication officer does not make a decision on your claim, your hearing request will be assigned to an administrative law judge for further proceedings.

(2) *Procedures for cases included in the tests.* Prior to commencing tests of the adjudication officer position in selected site(s), we will publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The notice will describe where the specific test site(s) will be and the duration of the test(s). We will also state whether the tests of the adjudication officer position in each site will be conducted alone, or in combination with the tests of the modifications to the disability determination procedures which we conduct under §416.1406. The individuals who participate in the test(s) will be assigned randomly to a test group in each site where the tests are conducted.

(b)(1) *Prehearing procedures conducted by an Adjudication Officer.* When you file a request for a hearing before an administrative law judge in connection with a claim for benefits based on disability where the question of whether you are under a disability as defined in §§416.905 and 416.906 is at issue, the adjudication officer will conduct an interview with you. The interview may take place in person, by telephone, or by videoconference, as the adjudication officer determines is appropriate under the circumstances of your case. If you

file a request for an extension of time to request a hearing in accordance with §416.1433(c), the adjudication officer may develop information on, and may decide where the adjudication officer issues a fully favorable decision to you that you had good cause for missing the deadline for requesting a hearing. To determine whether you had good cause for missing the deadline, the adjudication officer will use the standards contained in §416.1411.

(2) *Representation.* The adjudication officer will provide you with information regarding the hearing process, including your right to representation. As may be appropriate, the adjudication officer will provide you with referral sources for representation, and give you copies of necessary documents to facilitate the appointment of a representative. If you have a representative, the adjudication officer will conduct an informal conference with the representative, in person or by telephone, to identify the issues in dispute and prepare proposed written agreements for the approval of the administrative law judge regarding those issues which are not in dispute and those issues proposed for the hearing. If you decide to proceed without representation, the adjudication officer may hold an informal conference with you. If you obtain representation after the adjudication officer has concluded that your case is ready for a hearing, the administrative law judge will return your case to the adjudication officer who will conduct an informal conference with you and your representative.

(3) *Evidence.* You, or your representative, may submit, or may be asked to obtain and submit, additional evidence to the adjudication officer. As the adjudication officer determines is appropriate under the circumstances of your case, the adjudication officer may refer the claim for further medical or vocational evidence.

(4) *Referral for a hearing.* The adjudication officer will refer the claim to the administrative law judge for further proceedings when the development of evidence is complete, and you or your representative agree that a hearing is ready to be held. If you or your representative are unable to agree with

the adjudication officer that the development of evidence is complete, the adjudication officer will note your disagreement and refer the claim to the administrative law judge for further proceedings. At this point, the administrative law judge conducts all further hearing proceedings, including scheduling and holding a hearing, (§416.1436), considering any additional evidence or arguments submitted (§§416.1435, 416.1444, 416.1449, 416.1450), and issuing a decision or dismissal of your request for a hearing, as may be appropriate (§§416.1448, 416.1453, 416.1457). In addition, if the administrative law judge determines on or before the date of your hearing that the development of evidence is not complete, the administrative law judge may return the claim to the adjudication officer to complete the development of the evidence and for such other action as necessary.

(c)(1) *Fully favorable decisions issued by an adjudication officer.* If, after a hearing is requested but before it is held, the adjudication officer decides that the evidence in your case warrants a decision which is fully favorable to you, the adjudication officer may issue such a decision. For purposes of the tests authorized under this section, the adjudication officer's decision shall be considered to be a decision as defined in §416.1401. If the adjudication officer issues a decision under this section, it will be in writing and will give the findings of fact and the reasons for the decision. The adjudication officer will evaluate the issues relevant to determining whether or not you are disabled in accordance with the provisions of the Social Security Act, the rules in this part and part 422 of this chapter and applicable Social Security Rulings. For cases in which the adjudication officer issues a decision, he or she may determine your residual functional capacity in the same manner that an administrative law judge is authorized to do so in §416.946. The adjudication officer may also evaluate the severity of your mental impairments in the same manner that an administrative law judge is authorized to do so under §416.920a. The adjudication officer's decision will be based on the evidence which is included in the record and, subject to paragraph (c)(2)

of this section, will complete the actions that will be taken on your request for hearing. A copy of the decision will be mailed to all parties at their last known address. We will tell you in the notice that the administrative law judge will not hold a hearing unless a party to the hearing requests that the hearing proceed. A request to proceed with the hearing must be made in writing within 30 days after the date the notice of the decision of the adjudication officer is mailed.

(2) *Effect of a decision by an adjudication officer.* A decision by an adjudication officer which is fully favorable to you under this section, and notification thereof, completes the administrative action on your request for hearing and is binding on all parties to the hearing and not subject to further review, unless—

(i) You or another party requests that the hearing continue, as provided in paragraph (c)(1) of this section;

(ii) The Appeals Council decides to review the decision on its own motion under the authority provided in §416.1469;

(iii) The decision is revised under the procedures explained in §§416.1487 through 416.1489; or

(iv) In a case remanded by a Federal court, the Appeals Council assumes jurisdiction under the procedures in §416.1484.

(3) *Fee for a representative's services.* The adjudication officer may authorize a fee for your representative's services if the adjudication officer makes a decision on your claim that is fully favorable to you, and you are represented. The actions of, and any fee authorization made by, the adjudication officer with respect to representation will be made in accordance with the provisions of subpart O of this part.

(d) *Who may be an adjudication officer.* The adjudication officer described in this section may be an employee of the Social Security Administration or a State agency that makes disability determinations for us.

[60 FR 47476, Sept. 13, 1995, as amended at 75 FR 33169, June 11, 2010]

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1448

### ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE HEARING PROCEDURES

#### §416.1444 Administrative law judge hearing procedures—general.

A hearing is open to the parties and to other persons the administrative law judge considers necessary and proper. At the hearing the administrative law judge looks fully into the issues, questions you and the other witnesses, and accepts as evidence any documents that are material to the issues. The administrative law judge may stop the hearing temporarily and continue it at a later date if he or she believes that there is material evidence missing at the hearing. The administrative law judge may also reopen the hearing at any time before he or she mails a notice of the decision in order to receive new and material evidence. The administrative law judge may decide when the evidence will be presented and when the issues will be discussed.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986]

#### §416.1446 Issues before an administrative law judge.

(a) *General.* The issues before the administrative law judge include all the issues brought out in the initial, reconsidered or revised determination that were not decided entirely in your favor. However, if evidence presented before or during the hearing causes the administrative law judge to question a fully favorable determination, he or she will notify you and will consider it an issue at the hearing.

(b) *New issues—*(1) *General.* The administrative law judge may consider a new issue at the hearing if he or she notifies you and all the parties about the new issue any time after receiving the hearing request and before mailing notice of the hearing decision. The administrative law judge or any party may raise a new issue; an issue may be raised even though it arose after the request for a hearing and even though it has not been considered in an initial or reconsidered determination. However, it may not be raised if it involves a claim that is within the jurisdiction of a State agency under a Federal-

State agreement concerning the determination of disability.

(2) *Notice of a new issue.* The administrative law judge shall notify you and any other party if he or she will consider any new issue. Notice of the time and place of the hearing on any new issues will be given in the manner described in §416.1438, unless you have indicated in writing that you do not wish to receive the notice.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986]

#### §416.1448 Deciding a case without an oral hearing before an administrative law judge.

(a) *Decision fully favorable.* If the evidence in the hearing record supports a finding in favor of you and all the parties on every issue, the administrative law judge may issue a hearing decision based on a preponderance of the evidence without holding an oral hearing. The notice of the decision will state that you have the right to an oral hearing and to examine the evidence on which the administrative law judge based the decision.

(b) *Parties do not wish to appear.* (1) The administrative law judge may decide a case on the record and not conduct an oral hearing if—

(i) You and all the parties indicate in writing that you do not wish to appear before the administrative law judge at an oral hearing; or

(ii) You live outside the United States, you do not inform us that you wish to appear, and there are no other parties who wish to appear.

(2) When an oral hearing is not held, the administrative law judge shall make a record of the material evidence. The record will include the applications, written statements, certificates, reports, affidavits, and other documents which were used in making the determination under review and any additional evidence you or any other party to the hearing present in writing. The decision of the administrative law judge must be based on this record.

(c) *Case remanded for a revised determination.* (1) The administrative law judge may remand a case to the appropriate component of our office for a revised determination if there is reason

to believe that the revised determination would be fully favorable to you. This could happen if the administrative law judge receives new and material evidence or if there is a change in the law that permits the favorable determination.

(2) Unless you request the remand the administrative law judge shall notify you that your case has been remanded and tell you that if you object, you must notify him or her of your objections within 10 days of the date the case is remanded or we will assume that you agree to the remand. If you object to the remand, the administrative law judge will consider the objection and rule on it in writing.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986; 73 FR 76945, Dec. 18, 2008; 75 FR 33169, June 11, 2010; 76 FR 65371, Oct. 21, 2011]

**§416.1449 Presenting written statements and oral arguments.**

You or a person you designate to act as your representative may appear before the administrative law judge to state your case, to present a written summary of your case, or to enter written statements about the facts and law material to your case into the record. A copy of your written statements should be filed for each party.

**§416.1450 Presenting evidence at a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

(a) *The right to appear and present evidence.* Any party to a hearing has a right to appear before the administrative law judge, either in person, or, when the conditions in §416.1436(c)(1) exist, by video teleconferencing or telephone, to present evidence and to state his or her position. A party may also make his or her appearance by means of a designated representative, who may make the appearance in person, or, when the conditions in §416.1436(c)(1) exist, by video teleconferencing or telephone.

(b) *Waiver of the right to appear.* You may send the administrative law judge a waiver or a written statement indicating that you do not wish to appear at the hearing. You may withdraw this waiver any time before a notice of the hearing decision is mailed to you. Even

if all of the parties waive their right to appear at a hearing, we may notify them of a time and a place for an oral hearing, if the administrative law judge believes that a personal appearance and testimony by you or any other party is necessary to decide the case.

(c) *What evidence is admissible at a hearing.* The administrative law judge may receive evidence at the hearing even though the evidence would not be admissible in court under the rules of evidence used by the court.

(d) *Subpoenas.* (1) When it is reasonably necessary for the full presentation of a case, an administrative law judge or a member of the Appeals Council may, on his or her own initiative or at the request of a party, issue subpoenas for the appearance and testimony of witnesses and for the production of books, records, correspondence, papers, or other documents that are material to an issue at the hearing.

(2) Parties to a hearing who wish to subpoena documents or witnesses must file a written request for the issuance of a subpoena with the administrative law judge or at one of our offices at least 5 days before the hearing date. The written request must give the names of the witnesses or documents to be produced; describe the address or location of the witnesses or documents with sufficient detail to find them; state the important facts that the witness or document is expected to prove; and indicate why these facts could not be proven without issuing a subpoena.

(3) We will pay the cost of issuing the subpoena.

(4) We will pay subpoenaed witnesses the same fees and mileage they would receive if they had been subpoenaed by a Federal district court.

(e) *Witnesses at a hearing.* Witnesses may appear at a hearing in person or, when the conditions in §416.1436(c)(2) exist, by video teleconferencing or telephone. They will testify under oath or affirmation unless the administrative law judge finds an important reason to excuse them from taking an oath or affirmation. The administrative law judge may ask the witness any questions material to the issues and will allow the parties or their designated representatives to do so.



## Social Security Administration

## §416.1453

(f) *Collateral estoppel—issues previously decided.* An issue at your hearing may be a fact that has already been decided in one of our previous determinations or decisions in a claim involving the same parties, but arising under a different title of the Act or under the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act. If this happens, the administrative law judge will not consider the issue again, but will accept the factual finding made in the previous determination or decision unless there are reasons to believe that it was wrong.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 307, Jan. 3, 1986; 68 FR 5221, Feb. 3, 2003; 75 FR 39161, July 8, 2010; 78 FR 29628, May 21, 2013]

### **§416.1451 When a record of a hearing before an administrative law judge is made.**

The administrative law judge shall make a complete record of the hearing proceedings. The record will be prepared as a typed copy of the proceedings if—

(a) The case is sent to the Appeals Council without a decision or with a recommended decision by the administrative law judge;

(b) You seek judicial review of your case by filing an action in a Federal district court within the stated time period, unless we request the court to remand the case; or

(c) An administrative law judge or the Appeals Council asks for a written record of the proceedings.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986]

### **§416.1452 Consolidated hearings before an administrative law judge.**

(a) *General.* (1) A consolidated hearing may be held if—

(i) You have requested a hearing to decide your eligibility for supplemental security income benefits and you have also requested a hearing to decide your rights under another law we administer; and

(ii) One or more of the issues to be considered at the hearing you requested are the same issues that are involved in another claim you have pending before us.

(2) If the administrative law judge decides to hold the hearing on both

claims, he or she decides both claims, even if we have not yet made an initial or reconsidered determination on the other claim.

(b) *Record, evidence, and decision.* There will be a single record at a consolidated hearing. This means that the evidence introduced in one case becomes evidence in the other(s). The administrative law judge may make either a separate or consolidated decision.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986]

### **§416.1453 The decision of an administrative law judge.**

(a) *General.* The administrative law judge shall issue a written decision which gives the findings of fact and the reasons for the decision. The administrative law judge must base the decision on the preponderance of the evidence offered at the hearing or otherwise included in the record. The administrative law judge shall mail a copy of the decision to all the parties at their last known address. The Appeals Council may also receive a copy of the decision.

(b) *Fully favorable oral decision entered into the record at the hearing.* The administrative law judge may enter a fully favorable oral decision based on the preponderance of the evidence into the record of the hearing proceedings. If the administrative law judge enters a fully favorable oral decision into the record of the hearing proceedings, the administrative law judge may issue a written decision that incorporates the oral decision by reference. The administrative law judge may use this procedure only in those categories of cases that we identify in advance. The administrative law judge may only use this procedure in those cases where the administrative law judge determines that no changes are required in the findings of fact or the reasons for the decision as stated at the hearing. If a fully favorable decision is entered into the record at the hearing, the administrative law judge will also include in the record, as an exhibit entered into the record at the hearing, a document that sets forth the key data, findings of fact, and narrative rationale for the decision. If the decision incorporates by

## §416.1455

reference the findings and the reasons stated in an oral decision at the hearing, the parties shall also be provided, upon written request, a record of the oral decision.

(c) *Time for the administrative law judge's decision.* (1) The administrative law judge must issue the hearing decision no later than 90 days after the request for hearing is filed, unless—

(i) The matter to be decided is whether you are disabled; or

(ii) There is good cause for extending the time period because of unavoidable circumstances.

(2) Good cause for extending the time period may be found under the following circumstances:

(i) *Delay caused by you or by your representative's action.* The time period for decision in this instance may be extended by the total number of days of the delays. The delays include delays in submitting evidence, briefs, or other statements, postponements or adjournments made at your request, and any other delays caused by you or your representative.

(ii) *Other delays.* The time period for decision may be extended where delays occur through no fault of the Commissioner. In this instance, the decision will be issued as soon as practicable.

(d) *Recommended decision.* Although an administrative law judge will usually make a decision, the administrative law judge may send the case to the Appeals Council with a recommended decision based on a preponderance of the evidence when appropriate. The administrative law judge will mail a copy of the recommended decision to the parties at their last known addresses and send the recommended decision to the Appeals Council.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986; 54 FR 37793, Sept. 13, 1989; 62 FR 38455, July 18, 1997; 69 FR 61597, Oct. 20, 2004; 73 FR 76945, Dec. 18, 2008; 75 FR 33169, June 11, 2010]

### §416.1455 The effect of an administrative law judge's decision.

The decision of the administrative law judge is binding on all parties to the hearing unless—

(a) You or another party request a review of the decision by the Appeals Council within the stated time period,

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

and the Appeals Council reviews your case;

(b) You or another party requests a review of the decision by the Appeals Council within the stated time period, the Appeals Council denies your request for review, and you seek judicial review of your case by filing an action in a Federal district court;

(c) The decision is revised by an administrative law judge or the Appeals Council under the procedures explained in §416.1487;

(d) The expedited appeals process is used;

(e) The decision is a recommended decision directed to the Appeals Council; or

(f) In a case remanded by a Federal court, the Appeals Council assumes jurisdiction under the procedures in §416.1484.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986; 54 FR 37793, Sept. 13, 1989]

### §416.1456 Removal of a hearing request from an administrative law judge to the Appeals Council.

If you have requested a hearing and the request is pending before an administrative law judge, the Appeals Council may assume responsibility for holding a hearing by requesting that the administrative law judge send the hearing request to it. If the Appeals Council holds a hearing, it shall conduct the hearing according to the rules for hearings before an administrative law judge. Notice shall be mailed to all parties at their last known address telling them that the Appeals Council has assumed responsibility for the case.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986]

### §416.1457 Dismissal of a request for a hearing before an administrative law judge.

An administrative law judge may dismiss a request for a hearing under any of the following conditions:

(a) At any time before notice of the hearing decision is mailed, you or the party or parties that requested the hearing ask to withdraw the request.

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1460

This request may be submitted in writing to the administrative law judge or made orally at the hearing.

(b)(1)(i) Neither you nor the person you designate to act as your representative appears at the time and place set for the hearing and you have been notified before the time set for the hearing that your request for a hearing may be dismissed without further notice if you did not appear at the time and place of hearing, and good cause has not been found by the administrative law judge for your failure to appear; or

(ii) Neither you nor the person you designate to act as your representative appears at the time and place set for the hearing and within 10 days after the administrative law judge mails you a notice asking why you did not appear, you do not give a good reason for the failure to appear.

(2) In determining good cause or good reason under this paragraph, we will consider any physical, mental, educational, or linguistic limitations (including any lack of facility with the English language) which you may have.

(c) The administrative law judge decides that there is cause to dismiss a hearing request entirely or to refuse to consider any one or more of the issues because—

(1) The doctrine of *res judicata* applies in that we have made a previous determination or decision under this subpart about your rights on the same facts and on the same issue or issues, and this previous determination or decision has become final by either administrative or judicial action;

(2) The person requesting a hearing has no right to it under §416.1430;

(3) You did not request a hearing within the stated time period and we have not extended the time for requesting a hearing under §416.1433(c); or

(4) You die, there are no other parties, and we have no information to show that you may have a survivor who may be paid benefits due to you under §416.542(b) and who wishes to pursue the request for hearing, or that you authorized interim assistance reimbursement to a State pursuant to section 1631(g) of the Act. The administrative law judge, however, will vacate a dismissal of the hearing request if,

within 60 days after the date of the dismissal:

(i) A person claiming to be your survivor, who may be paid benefits due to you under §416.542(b), submits a written request for a hearing, and shows that a decision on the issues that were to be considered at the hearing may adversely affect him or her; or

(ii) We receive information showing that you authorized interim assistance reimbursement to a State pursuant to section 1631(g) of the Act.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 50 FR 21439, May 24, 1985; 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986; 58 FR 52913, Oct. 13, 1993; 59 FR 1637, Jan. 12, 1994]

### **§416.1458 Notice of dismissal of a request for a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

We shall mail a written notice of the dismissal of the hearing request to all parties at their last known address. The notice will state that there is a right to request that the Appeals Council vacate the dismissal action.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986]

### **§416.1459 Effect of dismissal of a request for a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

The dismissal of a request for a hearing is binding, unless it is vacated by an administrative law judge or the Appeals Council.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986]

### **§416.1460 Vacating a dismissal of a request for a hearing before an administrative law judge.**

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, an administrative law judge or the Appeals Council may vacate a dismissal of a request for a hearing if you request that we vacate the dismissal. If you or another party wish to make this request, you must do so within 60 days of the date you receive notice of the dismissal, and you must state why our dismissal of your request for a hearing was erroneous. The administrative law judge or Appeals Council will inform you in writing of the action taken on your request. The Appeals Council may also vacate a dismissal of a request for a

## §416.1461

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

hearing on its own motion. If the Appeals Council decides to vacate a dismissal on its own motion, it will do so within 60 days of the date we mail the notice of dismissal and will inform you in writing that it vacated the dismissal.

(b) If you wish to proceed with a hearing after you received a fully favorable revised determination under the prehearing case review process in §416.1441, you must follow the procedures in §416.1441(d) to request that an administrative law judge vacate his or her order dismissing your request for a hearing.

[76 FR 65371, Oct. 21, 2011]

### §416.1461 Prehearing and posthearing conferences.

The administrative law judge may decide on his or her own, or at the request of any party to the hearing, to hold a prehearing or posthearing conference to facilitate the hearing or the hearing decision. The administrative law judge shall tell the parties of the time, place and purpose of the conference at least seven days before the conference date, unless the parties have indicated in writing that they do not wish to receive a written notice of the conference. At the conference, the administrative law judge may consider matters in addition to those stated in the notice, if the parties consent in writing. A record of the conference will be made. The administrative law judge shall issue an order stating all agreements and actions resulting from the conference. If the parties do not object, the agreements and actions become part of the hearing record and are binding on all parties.

### §416.1465 [Reserved]

#### APPEALS COUNCIL REVIEW

### §416.1466 Testing elimination of the request for Appeals Council review.

(a) *Applicability and scope.* Notwithstanding any other provision in this part or part 422 of this chapter, we are establishing the procedures set out in this section to test elimination of the request for review by the Appeals Council. These procedures will apply in randomly selected cases in which we

have tested a combination of model procedures for modifying the disability claim process as authorized under §§416.1406 and 416.1443, and in which an administrative law judge has issued a decision (not including a recommended decision) that is less than fully favorable to you.

(b) *Effect of an administrative law judge's decision.* In a case to which the procedures of this section apply, the decision of an administrative law judge will be binding on all the parties to the hearing unless—

(1) You or another party file an action concerning the decision in Federal district court;

(2) The Appeals Council decides to review the decision on its own motion under the authority provided in §416.1469, and it issues a notice announcing its decision to review the case on its own motion no later than the day before the filing date of a civil action establishing the jurisdiction of a Federal district court; or

(3) The decision is revised by the administrative law judge or the Appeals Council under the procedures explained in §416.1487.

(c) *Notice of the decision of an administrative law judge.* The notice of decision the administrative law judge issues in a case processed under this section will advise you and any other parties to the decision that you may file an action in a Federal district court within 60 days after the date you receive notice of the decision.

(d) *Extension of time to file action in Federal district court.* Any party having a right to file a civil action under this section may request that the time for filing an action in Federal district court be extended. The request must be in writing and it must give the reasons why the action was not filed within the stated time period. The request must be filed with the Appeals Council. If you show that you had good cause for missing the deadline, the time period will be extended. To determine whether good cause exists, we will use the standards in §416.1411.

[62 FR 49603, Sept. 23, 1997, as amended at 75 FR 33169, June 11, 2010]

**§416.1467 Appeals Council review—general.**

If you or any other party is dissatisfied with the hearing decision or with the dismissal of a hearing request, you may request that the Appeals Council review that action. The Appeals Council may deny or dismiss the request for review, or it may grant the request and either issue a decision or remand the case to an administrative law judge. The Appeals Council shall notify the parties at their last known address of the action it takes.

**§416.1468 How to request Appeals Council review.**

(a) *Time and place to request Appeals Council review.* You may request Appeals Council review by filing a written request. Any documents or other evidence you wish to have considered by the Appeals Council should be submitted with your request for review. You may file your request at one of our offices within 60 days after the date you receive notice of the hearing decision or dismissal (or within the extended time period if we extend the time as provided in paragraph (b) of this section).

(b) *Extension of time to request review.* You or any party to a hearing decision may ask that the time for filing a request for the review be extended. The request for an extension of time must be in writing. It must be filed with the Appeals Council, and it must give the reasons why the request for review was not filed within the stated time period. If you show that you had good cause for missing the deadline, the time period will be extended. To determine whether good cause exists, we use the standards explained in §416.1411.

**§416.1469 Appeals Council initiates review.**

(a) *General.* Anytime within 60 days after the date of a decision or dismissal that is subject to review under this section, the Appeals Council may decide on its own motion to review the action that was taken in your case. We may refer your case to the Appeals Council for it to consider reviewing under this authority.

(b) *Identification of cases.* We will identify a case for referral to the Ap-

peals Council for possible review under its own-motion authority before we effectuate a decision in the case. We will identify cases for referral to the Appeals Council through random and selective sampling techniques, which we may use in association with examination of the cases identified by sampling. We will also identify cases for referral to the Appeals Council through the evaluation of cases we conduct in order to effectuate decisions.

(1) *Random and selective sampling and case examinations.* We may use random and selective sampling to identify cases involving any type of action (*i.e.*, fully or partially favorable decisions, unfavorable decisions, or dismissals) and any type of benefits (*i.e.*, benefits based on disability and benefits not based on disability). We will use selective sampling to identify cases that exhibit problematic issues or fact patterns that increase the likelihood of error. Neither our random sampling procedures nor our selective sampling procedures will identify cases based on the identity of the decisionmaker or the identity of the office issuing the decision. We may examine cases that have been identified through random or selective sampling to refine the identification of cases that may meet the criteria for review by the Appeals Council.

(2) *Identification as a result of the effectuation process.* We may refer a case requiring effectuation to the Appeals Council if, in the view of the effectuating component, the decision cannot be effectuated because it contains a clerical error affecting the outcome of the claim; the decision is clearly inconsistent with the Social Security Act, the regulations, or a published ruling; or the decision is unclear regarding a matter that affects the claim's outcome.

(c) *Referral of cases.* We will make referrals that occur as the result of a case examination or the effectuation process in writing. The written referral based on the results of such a case examination or the effectuation process will state the referring component's reasons for believing that the Appeals Council should review the case on its own motion. Referrals that result from

## §416.1470

selective sampling without a case examination may be accompanied by a written statement identifying the issue(s) or fact pattern that caused the referral. Referrals that result from random sampling without a case examination will only identify the case as a random sample case.

(d) *Appeals Council's action.* If the Appeals Council decides to review a decision or dismissal on its own motion, it will mail a notice of review to all the parties as provided in §416.1473. The Appeals Council will include with that notice a copy of any written referral it has received under paragraph (c) of this section. The Appeals Council's decision to review a case is established by its issuance of the notice of review. If it is unable to decide within the applicable 60-day period whether to review a decision or dismissal, the Appeals Council may consider the case to determine if the decision or dismissal should be reopened pursuant to §§416.1487 and 416.1488. If the Appeals Council decides to review a decision on its own motion or to reopen a decision as provided in §§416.1487 and 416.1488, the notice of review or the notice of reopening issued by the Appeals Council will advise, where appropriate, that interim benefits will be payable if a final decision has not been issued within 110 days after the date of the decision that is reviewed or reopened, and that any interim benefits paid will not be considered overpayments unless the benefits are fraudulently obtained.

[63 FR 36571, July 7, 1998, as amended at 75 FR 33169, June 11, 2010]

## §416.1470 Cases the Appeals Council will review.

(a) The Appeals Council will review a case if—

(1) There appears to be an abuse of discretion by the administrative law judge;

(2) There is an error of law;

(3) The action, findings or conclusions of the administrative law judge are not supported by substantial evidence; or

(4) There is a broad policy or procedural issue that may affect the general public interest.

(b) In reviewing decisions based on an application for benefits, if new and ma-

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

terial evidence is submitted, the Appeals Council shall consider the additional evidence only where it relates to the period on or before the date of the administrative law judge hearing decision. In reviewing decisions other than those based on an application for benefits, the Appeals Council shall evaluate the entire record including any new and material evidence submitted. It will then review the case if it finds that the administrative law judge's action, findings, or conclusion is contrary to the weight of the evidence currently of record.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 52 FR 4004, Feb. 9, 1987]

## §416.1471 Dismissal by Appeals Council.

The Appeals Council will dismiss your request for review if you did not file your request within the stated period of time and the time for filing has not been extended. The Appeals Council may also dismiss any proceedings before it if—

(a) You and any other party to the proceedings files a written request for dismissal; or

(b) You die, there are no other parties, and we have no information to show that you may have a survivor who may be paid benefits due to you under §416.542(b) and who wishes to pursue the request for review, or that you authorized interim assistance reimbursement to a State pursuant to section 1631(g) of the Act. The Appeals Council, however, will vacate a dismissal of the request for review if, within 60 days after the date of the dismissal:

(1) A person claiming to be your survivor, who may be paid benefits due to you under §416.542(b), submits a written request for review, and shows that a decision on the issues that were to be considered on review may adversely affect him or her; or

(2) We receive information showing that you authorized interim assistance reimbursement to a State pursuant to section 1631(g) of the Act.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 58 FR 52914, Oct. 13, 1993]

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1477

### **§416.1472 Effect of dismissal of request for Appeals Council review.**

The dismissal of a request for Appeals Council review is binding and not subject to further review.

### **§416.1473 Notice of Appeals Council review.**

When the Appeals Council decides to review a case, it shall mail a notice to all parties at their last known address stating the reasons for the review and the issues to be considered.

### **§416.1474 Obtaining evidence from Appeals Council.**

You may request and receive copies or a statement of the documents or other written evidence upon which the hearing decision or dismissal was based and a copy or summary of the transcript of oral evidence. However, you will be asked to pay the costs of providing these copies unless there is a good reason why you should not pay.

### **§416.1475 Filing briefs with the Appeals Council.**

Upon request, the Appeals Council shall give you and all other parties a reasonable opportunity to file briefs or other written statements about the facts and law relevant to the case. A copy of each brief or statement should be filed for each party.

### **§416.1476 Procedures before Appeals Council on review.**

(a) *Limitation of issues.* The Appeals Council may limit the issues it considers if it notifies you and the other parties of the issues it will review.

(b) *Evidence.* (1) In reviewing decisions based on an application for benefits, the Appeals Council will consider the evidence in the administrative law judge hearing record and any new and material evidence only if it relates to the period on or before the date of the administrative law judge hearing decision. If you submit evidence which does not relate to the period on or before the date of the administrative law judge hearing decision, the Appeals Council will return the additional evidence to you with an explanation as to why it did not accept the additional evidence and will advise you of your right to file a new application. The no-

tice returning the evidence to you will also advise you that if you file an application within 60 days after the date of the Appeals Council's notice, your request for review will constitute a written statement indicating an intent to claim benefits in accordance with §416.340. If a new application is filed within 60 days of this notice, the date of the request for review will be used as the filing date for your application.

(2) In reviewing decisions other than those based on an application for benefits, the Appeals Council will consider the evidence in the administrative law judge hearing record and any additional evidence it believes is material to an issue being considered.

(3) If additional evidence is needed, the Appeals Council may remand the case to an administrative law judge to receive evidence and issue a new decision. However, if the Appeals Council decides that it can obtain the evidence more quickly, it may do so, unless it will adversely affect your rights.

(c) *Oral argument.* You may request to appear before the Appeals Council to present oral argument. The Appeals Council will grant your request if it decides that your case raises an important question of law or policy or that oral argument would help to reach a proper decision. If your request to appear is granted, the Appeals Council will tell you the time and place of the oral argument at least 10 days before the scheduled date.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 52 FR 4004, Feb. 9, 1987]

### **§416.1477 Case remanded by Appeals Council.**

(a) *When the Appeals Council may remand a case.* The Appeals Council may remand a case to an administrative law judge so that he or she may hold a hearing and issue a decision or a recommended decision. The Appeals Council may also remand a case in which additional evidence is needed or additional action by the administrative law judge is required.

(b) *Action by administrative law judge on remand.* The administrative law judge shall take any action that is ordered by the Appeals Council and may take any additional action that is not

#### § 416.1479

inconsistent with the Appeals Council's remand order.

(c) *Notice when case is returned with a recommended decision.* When the administrative law judge sends a case to the Appeals Council with a recommended decision, a notice is mailed to the parties at their last known address. The notice tells them that the case has been sent to the Appeals Council, explains the rules for filing briefs or other written statements with the Appeals Council, and includes a copy of the recommended decision.

(d) *Filing briefs with and obtaining evidence from the Appeals Council.* (1) You may file briefs or other written statements about the facts and law relevant to your case with the Appeals Council within 20 days of the date that the recommended decision is mailed to you. Any party may ask the Appeals Council for additional time to file briefs or statements. The Appeals Council will extend this period, as appropriate, if you show that you had good cause for missing the deadline.

(2) All other rules for filing briefs with and obtaining evidence from the Appeals Council follow the procedures explained in this subpart.

(e) *Procedures before the Appeals Council.* (1) The Appeals Council after receiving a recommended decision will conduct its proceedings and issue its decision according to the procedures explained in this subpart.

(2) If the Appeals Council believes that more evidence is required, it may again remand the case to an administrative law judge for further inquiry into the issues, rehearing, receipt of evidence, and another decision or recommended decision. However, if the Appeals Council decides that it can get the additional evidence more quickly, it will take appropriate action.

#### § 416.1479 Decision of Appeals Council.

After it has reviewed all the evidence in the administrative law judge hearing record and any additional evidence received, subject to the limitations on Appeals Council consideration of additional evidence in §§ 416.1470(b) and 416.1476(b), the Appeals Council will make a decision or remand the case to an administrative law judge. The Appeals Council may affirm, modify or re-

#### 20 CFR Ch. III (4-1-14 Edition)

verse the administrative law judge hearing decision or it may adopt, modify or reject a recommended decision. If the Appeals Council issues its own decision, it will base its decision on the preponderance of the evidence. A copy of the Appeals Council's decision will be mailed to the parties at their last known address.

[52 FR 4005, Feb. 9, 1987, as amended at 73 FR 76945, Dec. 18, 2008]

#### § 416.1481 Effect of Appeals Council's decision or denial of review.

The Appeals Council may deny a party's request for review or it may decide to review a case and make a decision. The Appeals Council's decision, or the decision of the administrative law judge if the request for review is denied, is binding unless you or another party file an action in Federal district court, or the decision is revised. You may file an action in a Federal district court within 60 days after the date you receive notice of the Appeals Council's action.

#### § 416.1482 Extension of time to file action in Federal district court.

Any party to the Appeals Council's decision or denial of review, or to an expedited appeals process agreement, may request that the time for filing an action in a Federal district court be extended. The request must be in writing and it must give the reasons why the action was not filed within the stated time period. The request must be filed with the Appeals Council, or if it concerns an expedited appeals process agreement, with one of our offices. If you show that you had good cause for missing the deadline, the time period will be extended. To determine whether good cause exists, we use the standards explained in § 416.1411.

#### COURT REMAND CASES

#### § 416.1483 Case remanded by a Federal court.

When a Federal court remands a case to the Commissioner for further consideration, the Appeals Council, acting on behalf of the Commissioner, may make a decision, or it may remand the case to an administrative law judge with instructions to take action and



## Social Security Administration

## §416.1484

issue a decision or return the case to the Appeals Council with a recommended decision. If the case is remanded by the Appeals Council, the procedures explained in §416.1477 will be followed. Any issues relating to your claim may be considered by the administrative law judge whether or not they were raised in the administrative proceedings leading to the final decision in your case.

[54 FR 37793, Sept. 13, 1989, as amended at 62 FR 38455, July 18, 1997]

### **§416.1484 Appeals Council review of administrative law judge decision in a case remanded by a Federal court.**

(a) *General.* In accordance with §416.1483, when a case is remanded by a Federal court for further consideration, the decision of the administrative law judge will become the final decision of the Commissioner after remand on your case unless the Appeals Council assumes jurisdiction of the case. The Appeals Council may assume jurisdiction based on written exceptions to the decision of the administrative law judge which you file with the Appeals Council or based on its authority pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section. If the Appeals Council assumes jurisdiction of your case, any issues relating to your claim may be considered by the Appeals Council whether or not they were raised in the administrative proceedings leading to the final decision in your case or subsequently considered by the administrative law judge in the administrative proceedings following the court's remand order. The Appeals Council will either make a new, independent decision based on the preponderance of the evidence in the record that will be the final decision of the Commissioner after remand, or it will remand the case to an administrative law judge for further proceedings.

(b) *You file exceptions disagreeing with the decision of the administrative law judge.* (1) If you disagree with the decision of the administrative law judge, in whole or in part, you may file exceptions to the decision with the Appeals Council. Exceptions may be filed by submitting a written statement to the Appeals Council setting forth your reasons for disagreeing with the decision

of the administrative law judge. The exceptions must be filed within 30 days of the date you receive the decision of the administrative law judge or an extension of time in which to submit exceptions must be requested in writing within the 30-day period. A timely request for a 30-day extension will be granted by the Appeals Council. A request for an extension of more than 30 days should include a statement of reasons as to why you need the additional time.

(2) If written exceptions are timely filed, the Appeals Council will consider your reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the administrative law judge and all the issues presented by your case. If the Appeals Council concludes that there is no reason to change the decision of the administrative law judge, it will issue a notice to you addressing your exceptions and explaining why no change in the decision of the administrative law judge is warranted. In this instance, the decision of the administrative law judge is the final decision of the Commissioner after remand.

(3) When you file written exceptions to the decision of the administrative law judge, the Appeals Council may assume jurisdiction at any time, even after the 60-day time period which applies when you do not file exceptions. If the Appeals Council assumes jurisdiction, it will make a new, independent decision based on the preponderance of the evidence in the entire record affirming, modifying, or reversing the decision of the administrative law judge, or it will remand the case to an administrative law judge for further proceedings, including a new decision. The new decision of the Appeals Council is the final decision of the Commissioner after remand.

(c) *Appeals Council assumes jurisdiction without exceptions being filed.* Any time within 60 days after the date of the decision of the administrative law judge, the Appeals Council may decide to assume jurisdiction of your case even though no written exceptions have been filed. Notice of this action will be mailed to all parties at their last known address. You will be provided with the opportunity to file briefs or

other written statements with the Appeals Council about the facts and law relevant to your case. After the Appeals Council receives the briefs or other written statements, or the time allowed (usually 30 days) for submitting them has expired, the Appeals Council will either issue a final decision of the Commissioner based on the preponderance of the evidence affirming, modifying, or reversing the decision of the administrative law judge, or remand the case to an administrative law judge for further proceedings, including a new decision.

(d) *Exceptions are not filed and the Appeals Council does not otherwise assume jurisdiction.* If no exceptions are filed and the Appeals Council does not assume jurisdiction of your case, the decision of the administrative law judge becomes the final decision of the Commissioner after remand.

[54 FR 37793, Sept. 13, 1989, as amended at 62 FR 38455, July 18, 1997; 73 FR 76945, Dec. 18, 2008]

**§ 416.1485 Application of circuit court law.**

The procedures which follow apply to administrative determinations or decisions on claims involving the application of circuit court law.

(a) *General.* We will apply a holding in a United States Court of Appeals decision that we determine conflicts with our interpretation of a provision of the Social Security Act or regulations unless the Government seeks further judicial review of that decision or we re-litigate the issue presented in the decision in accordance with paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section. We will apply the holding to claims at all levels of the administrative review process within the applicable circuit unless the holding, by its nature, applies only at certain levels of adjudication.

(b) *Issuance of an Acquiescence Ruling.* When we determine that a United States Court of Appeals holding conflicts with our interpretation of a provision of the Social Security Act or regulations and the Government does not seek further judicial review or is unsuccessful on further review, we will issue a Social Security Acquiescence Ruling. The Acquiescence Ruling will describe the administrative case and

the court decision, identify the issue(s) involved, and explain how we will apply the holding, including, as necessary, how the holding relates to other decisions within the applicable circuit. These Acquiescence Rulings will generally be effective on the date of their publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER and will apply to all determinations, redeterminations, and decisions made on or after that date unless an Acquiescence Ruling is rescinded as stated in paragraph (e) of this section. The process we will use when issuing an Acquiescence Ruling follows:

(1) We will release an Acquiescence Ruling for publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER for any precedential circuit court decision that we determine contains a holding that conflicts with our interpretation of a provision of the Social Security Act or regulations no later than 120 days from the receipt of the court's decision. This timeframe will not apply when we decide to seek further judicial review of the circuit court decision or when coordination with the Department of Justice and/or other Federal agencies makes this timeframe no longer feasible.

(2) If we make a determination or decision on your claim between the date of a circuit court decision and the date we publish an Acquiescence Ruling, you may request application of the published Acquiescence Ruling to the prior determination or decision. You must demonstrate that application of the Acquiescence Ruling could change the prior determination or decision in your case. You may demonstrate this by submitting a statement that cites the Acquiescence Ruling or the holding or portion of a circuit court decision which could change the prior determination or decision in your case. If you can so demonstrate, we will re-adjudicate the claim in accordance with the Acquiescence Ruling at the level at which it was last adjudicated. Any readjudication will be limited to consideration of the issue(s) covered by the Acquiescence Ruling and any new determination or decision on readjudication will be subject to administrative and judicial review in accordance with this subpart. Our denial of a request for readjudication will not be

subject to further administrative or judicial review. If you file a request for readjudication within the 60-day appeal period and we deny that request, we shall extend the time to file an appeal on the merits of the claim to 60 days after the date that we deny the request for readjudication.

(3) After we receive a precedential circuit court decision and determine that an Acquiescence Ruling may be required, we will begin to identify those claims that are pending before us within the circuit and that might be subject to readjudication if an Acquiescence Ruling is subsequently issued. When an Acquiescence Ruling is published, we will send a notice to those individuals whose cases we have identified which may be affected by the Acquiescence Ruling. The notice will provide information about the Acquiescence Ruling and the right to request readjudication under that Acquiescence Ruling, as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section. It is not necessary for an individual to receive a notice in order to request application of an Acquiescence Ruling to his or her claim, as described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(c) *Relitigation of court's holding after publication of an Acquiescence Ruling.* After we have published an Acquiescence Ruling to reflect a holding of a United States Court of Appeals on an issue, we may decide under certain conditions to relitigate that issue within the same circuit. We may relitigate only when the conditions specified in paragraphs (c)(2) and (3) of this section are met, and, in general, one of the events specified in paragraph (c)(1) of this section occurs.

(1) Activating events:

(i) An action by both Houses of Congress indicates that a circuit court decision on which an Acquiescence Ruling was based was decided inconsistently with congressional intent, such as may be expressed in a joint resolution, an appropriations restriction, or enactment of legislation which affects a closely analogous body of law;

(ii) A statement in a majority opinion of the same circuit indicates that the court might no longer follow its previous decision if a particular issue were presented again;

(iii) Subsequent circuit court precedent in other circuits supports our interpretation of the Social Security Act or regulations on the issue(s) in question; or

(iv) A subsequent Supreme Court decision presents a reasonable legal basis for questioning a circuit court holding upon which we base an Acquiescence Ruling.

(2) The General Counsel of the Social Security Administration, after consulting with the Department of Justice, concurs that relitigation of an issue and application of our interpretation of the Social Security Act or regulations to selected claims in the administrative review process within the circuit would be appropriate.

(3) We publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER that we intend to relitigate an Acquiescence Ruling issue and that we will apply our interpretation of the Social Security Act or regulations within the circuit to claims in the administrative review process selected for relitigation. The notice will explain why we made this decision.

(d) *Notice of relitigation.* When we decide to relitigate an issue, we will provide a notice explaining our action to all affected claimants. In adjudicating claims subject to relitigation, decision-makers throughout the SSA administrative review process will apply our interpretation of the Social Security Act and regulations, but will also state in written determinations or decisions how the claims would have been decided under the circuit standard. Claims not subject to relitigation will continue to be decided under the Acquiescence Ruling in accordance with the circuit standard. So that affected claimants can be readily identified and any subsequent decision of the circuit court or the Supreme Court can be implemented quickly and efficiently, we will maintain a listing of all claimants who receive this notice and will provide them with the relief ordered by the court.

(e) *Rescission of an Acquiescence Ruling.* We will rescind as obsolete an Acquiescence Ruling and apply our interpretation of the Social Security Act or regulations by publishing a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER when any of the following events occurs:

## § 416.1487

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)

(1) The Supreme Court overrules or limits a circuit court holding that was the basis of an Acquiescence Ruling;

(2) A circuit court overrules or limits itself on an issue that was the basis of an Acquiescence Ruling;

(3) A Federal law is enacted that removes the basis for the holding in a decision of a circuit court that was the subject of an Acquiescence Ruling; or

(4) We subsequently clarify, modify or revoke the regulation or ruling that was the subject of a circuit court holding that we determined conflicts with our interpretation of the Social Security Act or regulations, or we subsequently publish a new regulation(s) addressing an issue(s) not previously included in our regulations when that issue(s) was the subject of a circuit court holding that conflicted with our interpretation of the Social Security Act or regulations and that holding was not compelled by the statute or Constitution.

[63 FR 24933, May 6, 1998]

### REOPENING AND REVISING DETERMINATIONS AND DECISIONS

#### § 416.1487 Reopening and revising determinations and decisions.

(a) *General.* Generally, if you are dissatisfied with a determination or decision made in the administrative review process, but do not request further review within the stated time period, you lose your right to further review and that determination or decision becomes final. However, a determination or a decision made in your case which is otherwise final and binding may be reopened and revised by us.

(b) *Procedure for reopening and revision.* We may reopen a final determination or decision on our own initiative, or you may ask that a final determination or a decision to which you were a party be reopened. In either instance, if we reopen the determination or decision, we may revise that determination or decision. The conditions under which we may reopen a previous determination or decision, either on our own initiative or at your request, are explained in § 416.1488.

[59 FR 8535, Feb. 23, 1994]

#### § 416.1488 Conditions for reopening.

A determination, revised determination, decision, or revised decision may be reopened—

(a) Within 12 months of the date of the notice of the initial determination, for any reason;

(b) Within two years of the date of the notice of the initial determination if we find good cause, as defined in § 416.1489, to reopen the case; or

(c) At any time if it was obtained by fraud or similar fault. In determining whether a determination or decision was obtained by fraud or similar fault, we will take into account any physical, mental, educational, or linguistic limitations (including any lack of facility with the English language) which you may have had at the time.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 59 FR 1637, Jan. 12, 1994]

#### § 416.1489 Good cause for reopening.

(a) We will find that there is good cause to reopen a determination or decision if—

(1) New and material evidence is furnished;

(2) A clerical error was made; or

(3) The evidence that was considered in making the determination or decision clearly shows on its face that an error was made.

(b) We will not find good cause to reopen your case if the only reason for reopening is a change of legal interpretation or administrative ruling upon which the determination or decision was made.

#### § 416.1491 Late completion of timely investigation.

We may revise a determination or decision after the applicable time period in § 416.1488(a) or § 416.1488(b) expires if we begin an investigation into whether to revise the determination or decision before the applicable time period expires. We may begin the investigation either based on a request by you or by an action on our part. The investigation is a process of gathering facts after a determination or decision has been reopened to determine if a revision of the determination or decision is applicable.

## Social Security Administration

## §416.1493

(a) If we have diligently pursued the investigation to its conclusion, we may revise the determination or decision. The revision may be favorable or unfavorable to you. “Diligently pursued” means that in light of the facts and circumstances of a particular case, the necessary action was undertaken and carried out as promptly as the circumstances permitted. Diligent pursuit will be presumed to have been met if we conclude the investigation and if necessary, revise the determination or decision within 6 months from the date we began the investigation.

(b) If we have not diligently pursued the investigation to its conclusion, we will revise the determination or decision if a revision is applicable and if it will be favorable to you. We will not revise the determination or decision if it will be unfavorable to you.

[49 FR 46370, Nov. 26, 1984; 49 FR 48036, Dec. 10, 1984]

### **§416.1492 Notice of revised determination or decision.**

(a) When a determination or decision is revised, notice of the revision will be mailed to the parties at their last known address. The notice will state the basis for the revised determination or decision and the effect of the revision. The notice will also inform the parties of the right to further review.

(b) If a determination is revised and the revised determination requires that your benefits be suspended, reduced, or terminated, the notice will inform you of your right to continued payment (see §416.1336 and the exceptions set out in §416.1337) and of your right of reconsideration.

(c) If a determination is revised and the revised determination does not require that your benefits be suspended, reduced, or terminated, the notice will inform you of your right to a hearing before an administrative law judge.

(d) If a reconsidered determination that you are blind or disabled, based on medical factors, is reopened for the purpose of being revised, you will be notified, in writing, of the proposed revision and of your right to request that a disability hearing be held before a revised reconsidered determination is issued. If a revised reconsidered determination is issued, you may request a

hearing before an administrative law judge.

(e) If an administrative law judge or the Appeals Council proposes to revise a decision, and the revision would be based on evidence not included in the record on which the prior decision was based, you and any other parties to the decision will be notified, in writing, of the proposed action and of your right to request that a hearing be held before any further action is taken. If a revised decision is issued by an administrative law judge, you and any other party may request that it be reviewed by the Appeals Council, or the Appeals Council may review the decision on its own initiative.

(f) If an administrative law judge or the Appeals Council proposes to revise a decision, and the revision would be based only on evidence included in the record on which the prior decision was based, you and any other parties to the decision will be notified, in writing, of the proposed action. If a revised decision is issued by an administrative law judge, you and any other party may request that it be reviewed by the Appeals Council, or the Appeals Council may review the decision on its own initiative.

(g) An administrative law judge may, in connection with a valid request for a hearing, propose to reopen an issue other than the issue on which the request for a hearing was based. The administrative law judge will follow the time limits for reopenings set out in §416.1488. The administrative law judge shall mail to the parties at their last known address a notice of the reopening.

[45 FR 52096, Aug. 5, 1980, as amended at 51 FR 308, Jan. 3, 1986]

### **§416.1493 Effect of revised determination or decision.**

A revised determination or decision is binding unless—

(a) You or a party to the revised determination file a written request for a reconsideration or a hearing;

(b) You or another party to the revised decision file, as appropriate, a request for review by the Appeals Council or a hearing;

(c) The Appeals Council reviews the revised decision; or

## § 416.1494

(d) The revised determination or decision is further revised.

### **§ 416.1494 Time and place to request further review or a hearing on revised determination or decision.**

You or another party to the revised determination or decision may request, as appropriate, further review or a hearing on the revision by filing a request in writing at one of our offices within 60 days after the date you receive notice of the revision. Further review or a hearing will be held on the revision according to the rules of this subpart.

## **PAYMENT OF CERTAIN TRAVEL EXPENSES**

### **§ 416.1495 Payment of certain travel expenses—general.**

When you file a claim for supplemental security income (SSI) benefits, you may incur certain travel expenses in pursuing your claim. Sections 416.1496 through 416.1499 explain who may be reimbursed for travel expenses, the types of travel expenses that are reimbursable, and when and how to claim reimbursement. Generally, the agency that requests you to travel will be the agency that reimburses you. No later than when it notifies you of the examination or hearing described in § 416.1496(a), that agency will give you information about the right to travel reimbursement, the right to advance payment and how to request it, the rules on means of travel and unusual travel costs, and the need to submit receipts.

[51 FR 8810, Mar. 14, 1986]

### **§ 416.1496 Who may be reimbursed.**

(a) The following individuals may be reimbursed for certain travel expenses—

(1) You, when you attend medical examinations upon request in connection with disability determinations; these are medical examinations requested by the State agency or by us when additional medical evidence is necessary to make a disability determination (also referred to as consultative examinations, see § 416.917);

(2) You, your representative (see § 416.1505 (a) and (b)), and all unsubpoenaed witnesses we or the State agency

## **20 CFR Ch. III (4–1–14 Edition)**

determines to be reasonably necessary who attend disability hearings; and

(3) You, your representative, and all unsubpoenaed witnesses we determine to be reasonably necessary who attend hearings on any claim for SSI benefits before an administrative law judge.

(b) Sections 416.1495 through 416.1499 do not apply to subpoenaed witnesses. They are reimbursed under §§ 416.1450(d) and 416.1416(b)(1).

[51 FR 8810, Mar. 14, 1986]

### **§ 416.1498 What travel expenses are reimbursable.**

Reimbursable travel expenses include the ordinary expenses of public or private transportation as well as unusual costs due to special circumstances.

(a) Reimbursement for ordinary travel expenses is limited—

(1) To the cost of travel by the most economical and expeditious means of transportation available and appropriate to the individual's condition of health as determined by the State agency or by us, considering the available means in the following order—

(i) Common carrier (air, rail, or bus);

(ii) Privately owned vehicles;

(iii) Commercially rented vehicles and other special conveyances;

(2) If air travel is necessary, to the coach fare for air travel between the specified travel points involved unless first-class air travel is authorized in advance by the State agency or by the Secretary in instances when—

(i) Space is not available in less-than-first-class accommodations on any scheduled flights in time to accomplish the purpose of the travel;

(ii) First-class accommodations are necessary because you, your representative, or reasonably necessary witness is so handicapped or otherwise impaired that other accommodations are not practical and the impairment is substantiated by competent medical authority;

(iii) Less-than-first-class accommodations on foreign carriers do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards; or

(iv) The use of first-class accommodations would result in an overall savings to the government based on economic considerations, such as the avoidance of additional subsistence

costs that would be incurred while awaiting availability of less-than-first-class accommodations.

(b) Unusual travel costs may be reimbursed but must be authorized in advance and in writing by us or the appropriate State official, as applicable, unless they are unexpected or unavoidable; we or the State agency must determine their reasonableness and necessity and must approve them before payment can be made. Unusual expenses that may be covered in connection with travel include, but are not limited to—

- (1) Ambulance services;
- (2) Attendant services;
- (3) Meals;
- (4) Lodging; and
- (5) Taxicabs.

(c) If we reimburse you for travel, we apply the rules in §§416.1496 through 416.1499 and the same rates and conditions of payment that govern travel expenses for Federal employees as authorized under 41 CFR chapter 301. If a State agency reimburses you, the reimbursement rates shall be determined by the rules in §§416.1496 through 416.1499 and that agency's rules and regulations and may differ from one agency to another and also may differ from the Federal reimbursement rates.

(1) When public transportation is used, reimbursement will be made for the actual costs incurred, subject to the restrictions in paragraph (a)(2) of this section on reimbursement for first-class air travel.

(2) When travel is by a privately owned vehicle, reimbursement will be made at the current Federal or State mileage rate specified for that geographic location plus the actual costs of tolls and parking, if travel by a privately owned vehicle is determined appropriate under paragraph (a)(1) of this section. Otherwise, the amount of reimbursement for travel by privately owned vehicle cannot exceed the total cost of the most economical public transportation for travel between the same two points. "Total cost" includes the cost for all the authorized travelers who travel in the same privately owned vehicle. Advance approval of travel by privately owned vehicle is not required (but could give you assurance of its approval).

(3) Sometimes your health condition dictates a mode of transportation different from most economical and expeditious. In order for your health to require a mode of transportation other than common carrier or passenger car, you must be so handicapped or otherwise impaired as to require special transportation arrangements and the condition must be substantiated by competent medical authority.

(d) For travel to a hearing—

(1) Reimbursement is limited to travel within the U.S. For this purpose, the U.S. includes the U.S. as defined in §416.120(c)(10).

(2) When the travel is performed after September 30, 1981, we or the State agency will reimburse you, your representative, or an un subpoenaed witness only if the distance from the person's residence or office (whichever he or she travels from) to the hearing site exceeds 75 miles.

(3) For travel expenses incurred on or after April 1, 1991, the amount of reimbursement under this section for travel by your representative to attend a disability hearing or a hearing before an administrative law judge shall not exceed the maximum amount allowable under this section for travel to the hearing site from any point within the geographic area of the office having jurisdiction over the hearing.

(i) The geographic area of the office having jurisdiction over the hearing means, as appropriate—

(A) The designated geographic service area of the State agency adjudicatory unit having responsibility for providing the disability hearing;

(B) If a Federal disability hearing officer holds the disability hearing, the geographic area of the State (as defined in §416.120(c)(9)) in which the claimant resides or, if the claimant is not a resident of a State, in which the hearing officer holds the disability hearing; or

(C) The designated geographic service area of the Office of Hearings and Appeals hearing office having responsibility for providing the hearing before an administrative law judge.

(ii) We or the State agency determine the maximum amount allowable for travel by a representative based on the distance to the hearing site from the

## §416.1499

farthest point within the appropriate geographic area. In determining the maximum amount allowable for travel between these two points, we or the State agency apply the rules in paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section and the limitations in paragraph (d) (1) and (4) of this section. If the distance between these two points does not exceed 75 miles, we or the State agency will not reimburse any of your representative's travel expenses.

(4) If a change in the location of the hearing is made at your request from the location we or the State agency selected to one farther from your residence or office, neither your additional travel expenses nor the additional travel expenses of your representative and witnesses will be reimbursed.

[51 FR 8810, Mar. 14, 1986, as amended at 59 FR 8532, Feb. 23, 1994]

### §416.1499 When and how to claim reimbursement.

(a)(1) Generally, you will be reimbursed for your expenses after your trip. However, travel advances may be authorized if you request prepayment and show that the requested advance is reasonable and necessary.

(2) You must submit to us or the State agency, as appropriate, an itemized list of what you spent and supporting receipts to be reimbursed.

(3) Arrangements for special means of transportation and related unusual costs may be made only if we or the State agency authorizes the costs in writing in advance of travel, unless the costs are unexpected or unavoidable. If they are unexpected or unavoidable we or the State agency must determine their reasonableness and necessity and must approve them before payment may be made.

(4) If you receive prepayment, you must, within 20 days after your trip, provide to us or the State agency, as appropriate, an itemized list of your actual travel costs and submit supporting receipts. We or the State agency will require you to pay back any balance of the advanced amount that exceeds any approved travel expenses within 20 days after you are notified of the amount of that balance. (State agencies may have their own time lim-

## 20 CFR Ch. III (4-1-14 Edition)

its in place of the 20-day periods in the preceding two sentences.)

(b) You may claim reimbursable travel expenses incurred by your representative for which you have been billed by your representative, except that if your representative makes a claim for them to us or the State, he or she will be reimbursed directly.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0960-0434)

[51 FR 8810, Mar. 14, 1986, as amended at 51 FR 44983, Dec. 16, 1986]

### Subpart O—Representation of Parties

AUTHORITY: Secs. 702(a)(5), 1127, and 1631(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 902(a)(5), 1320a-6, and 1383(d)).

SOURCE: 45 FR 52106, Aug. 5, 1980, unless otherwise noted.

### §416.1500 Introduction.

You may appoint someone to represent you in any of your dealings with us. This subpart explains, among other things—

(a) Who may be your representative and what his or her qualifications must be;

(b) How you appoint a representative;

(c) The payment of fees to a representative;

(d) Our rules that representatives must follow; and

(e) What happens to a representative who breaks the rules.

### §416.1503 Definitions.

As used in this subpart:

*Date we notify him or her* means 5 days after the date on the notice, unless the recipient shows us that he or she did not receive it within the 5-day period.

*Eligible non-attorney* means a non-attorney representative who we determine is qualified to receive direct payment of his or her fee under §416.1517(a).

*Entity* means any business, firm, or other association, including but not limited to partnerships, corporations, for-profit organizations, and not-for-profit organizations.

*Federal agency* refers to any authority of the Executive branch of the Government of the United States.